

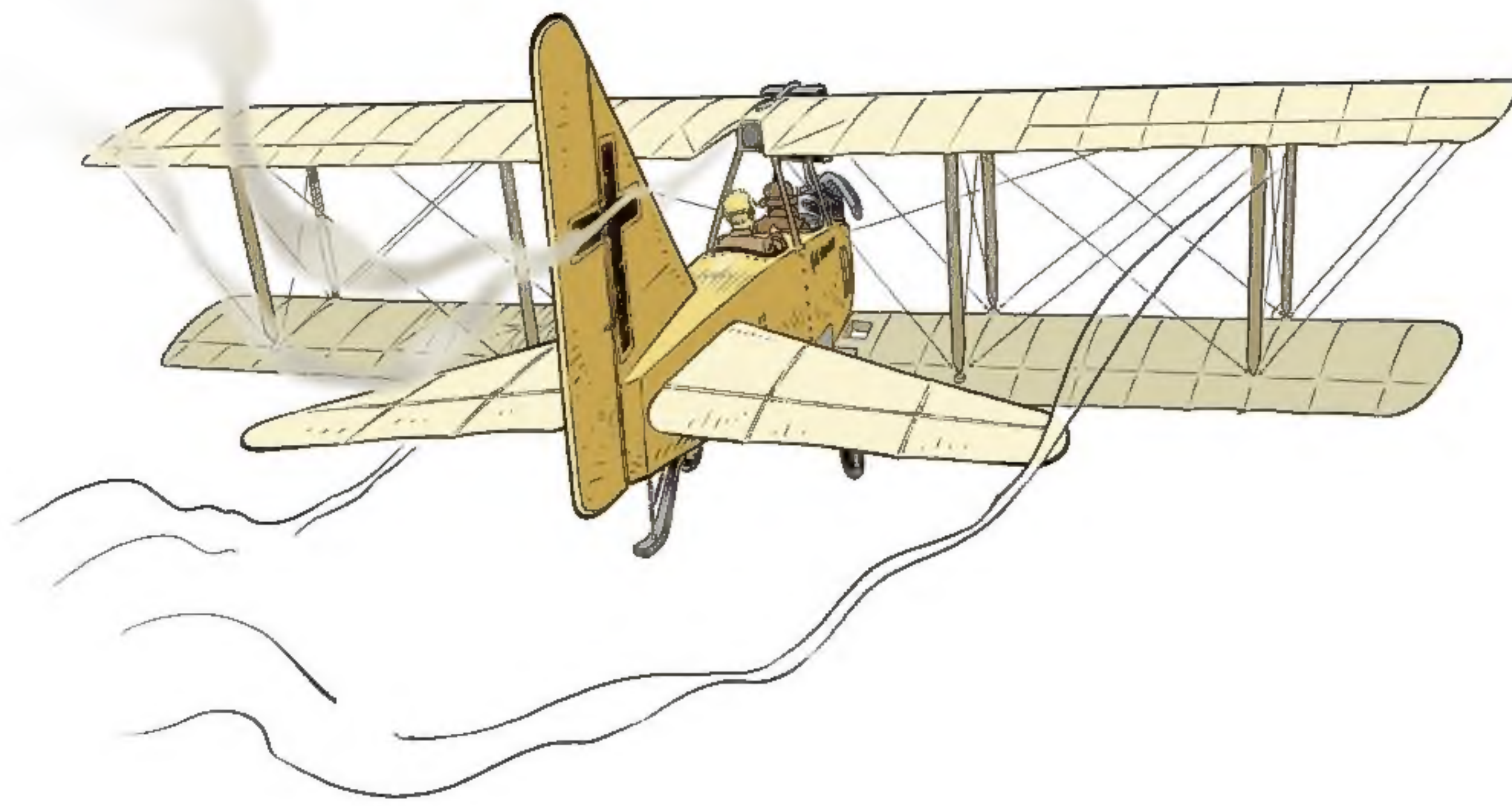
KRAEHN · ARNOUX · MILLIEN

THE AVIATOR

1. Take-off



euRoPe
COMICS



THE AVIATOR

1. Take-off

WRITER

JEAN-CHARLES KRAEHN

ARTISTS

ERIK ARNOUX & CHRYS MILLIEN

COLORIST

PATRICIA JAMBERS



PREFACE

In volume nine of the series *Tramp*, artist Patrick Jusseaume and I introduced Tanguy-la-vie-dure* (“Hard Knock” Tanguy), a French pilot taking part in the First Indochina War. My instructions to Patrick were to show a character marked by life’s hardships. Like all those who flew in the Gulf of Tonkin during the war in nearly suicidal conditions, he had his cracks. The kinds of cracks you might find in an old hovel: deep, broad, and beyond repair.

With a few deft strokes, Patrick brought this character to life over two pages. Apparently, it was enough to make a mark, because a few years later, Philippe Ostermann, our editor at Dargaud, brought him up again. “That guy must have lived an incredible life,” he said. “Why not tell his story?”

That was all that was needed to give new life to our seasoned pilot. Well, that and a new narrative arc, as well as the talent and enthusiasm of two artists and a colorist!

Here’s hoping, dear readers, that you’ll enjoy the ride with Josef “Hard Knock” Tanguy.

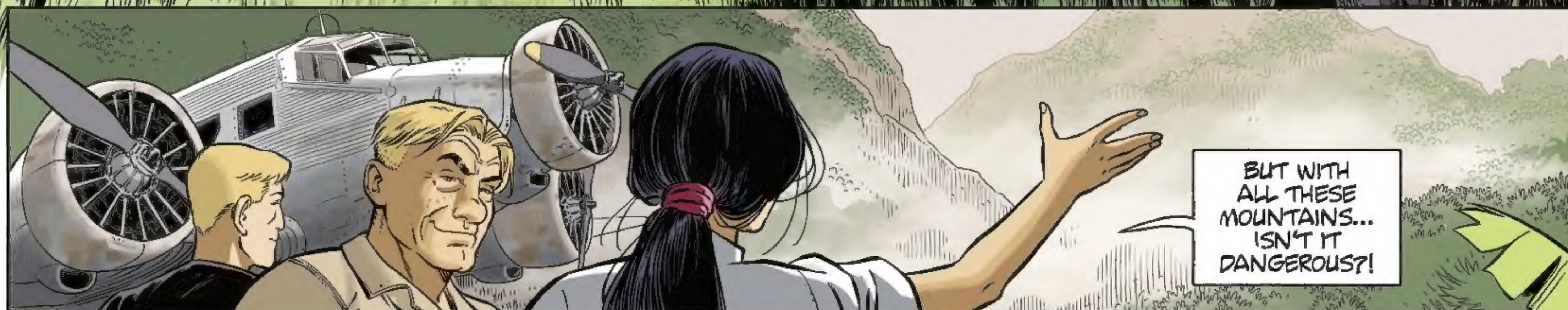
Jean-Charles Kraehn

* Unapologetic wordplay on the legendary aviation adventure series *Tanguy et Laverdure*, by J.-M. Charlier and A. Uderzo.

IT'S COMPLETELY IMPENETRABLE. SURELY WE CAN'T TAKE OFF WITHOUT A GONIOMETER? (1)

I THOUGHT YOU WANTED TO GET BACK TO SAIGON FAST, HA TU? THIS FOG COULD LAST DAYS...

TONKIN, VIETNAM, 1952. NASSAN AIRFIELD, SOUTH OF SON LA.

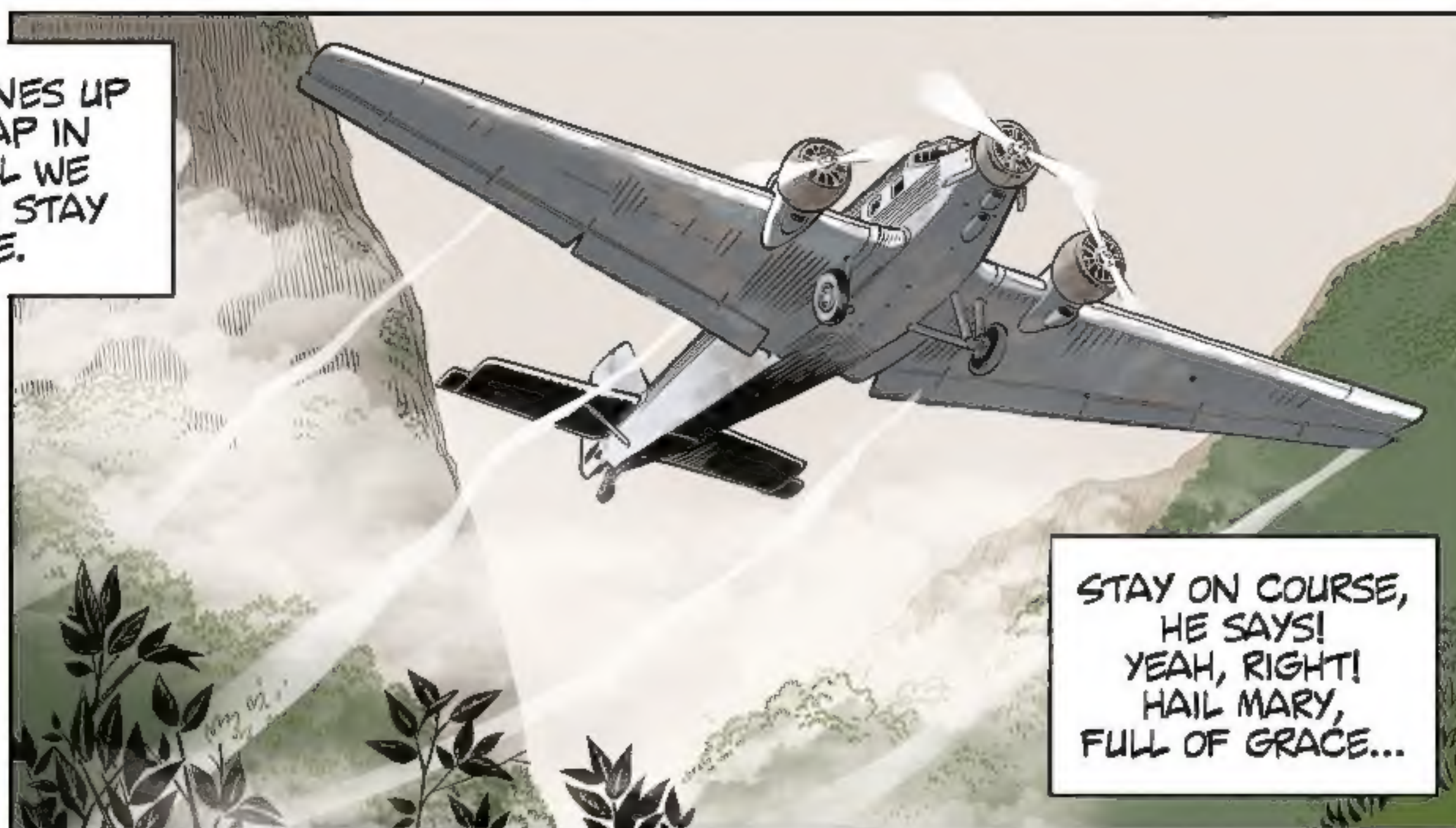
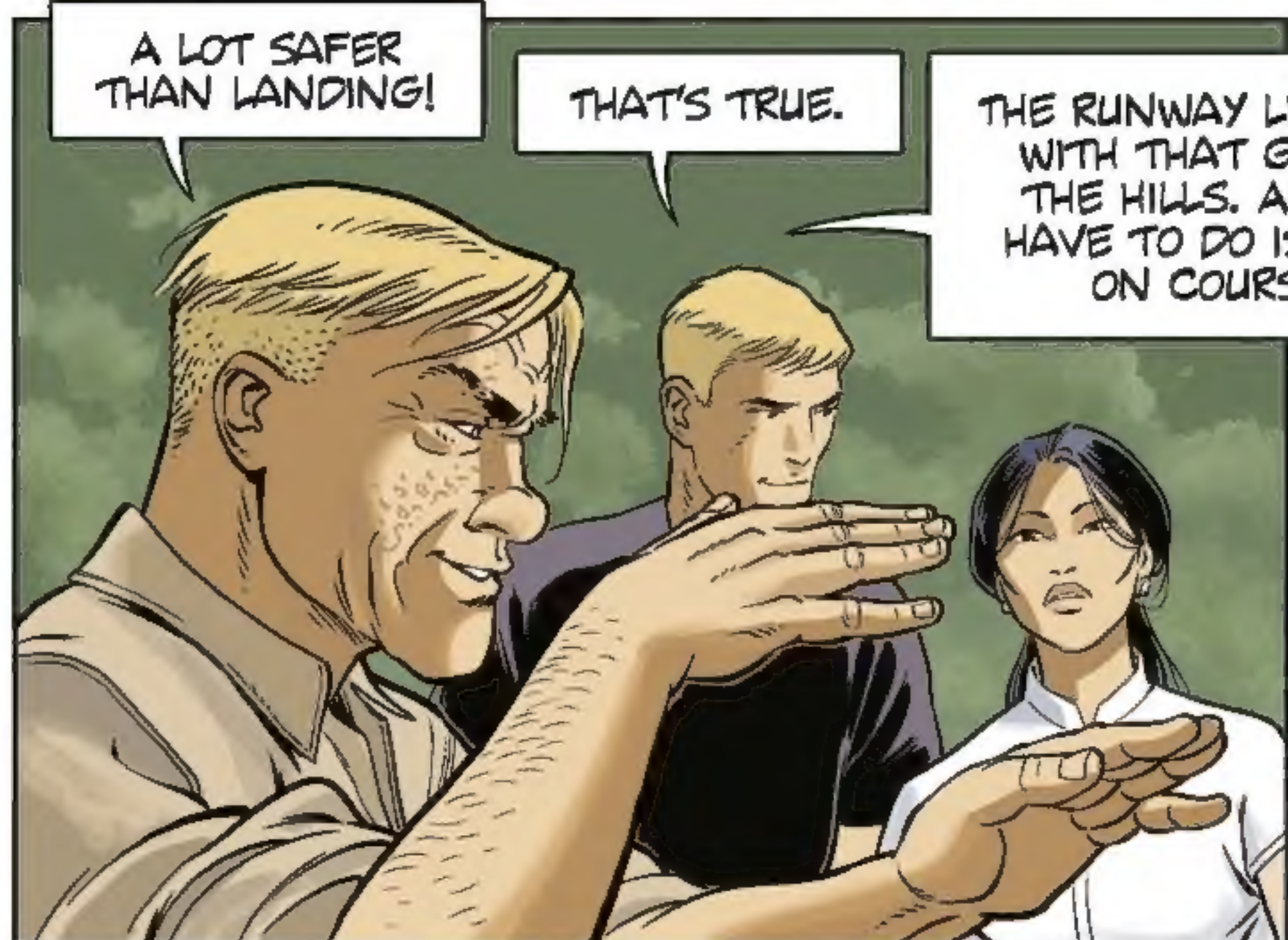


BUT WITH ALL THESE MOUNTAINS... ISN'T IT DANGEROUS?!

A LOT SAFER THAN LANDING!

THAT'S TRUE.

THE RUNWAY LINES UP WITH THAT GAP IN THE HILLS. ALL WE HAVE TO DO IS STAY ON COURSE.



STAY ON COURSE, HE SAYS! YEAH, RIGHT! HAIL MARY, FULL OF GRACE...



I GUESS IT'S ALL BEEN TOO MUCH FOR HER.

SHE ASLEEP?

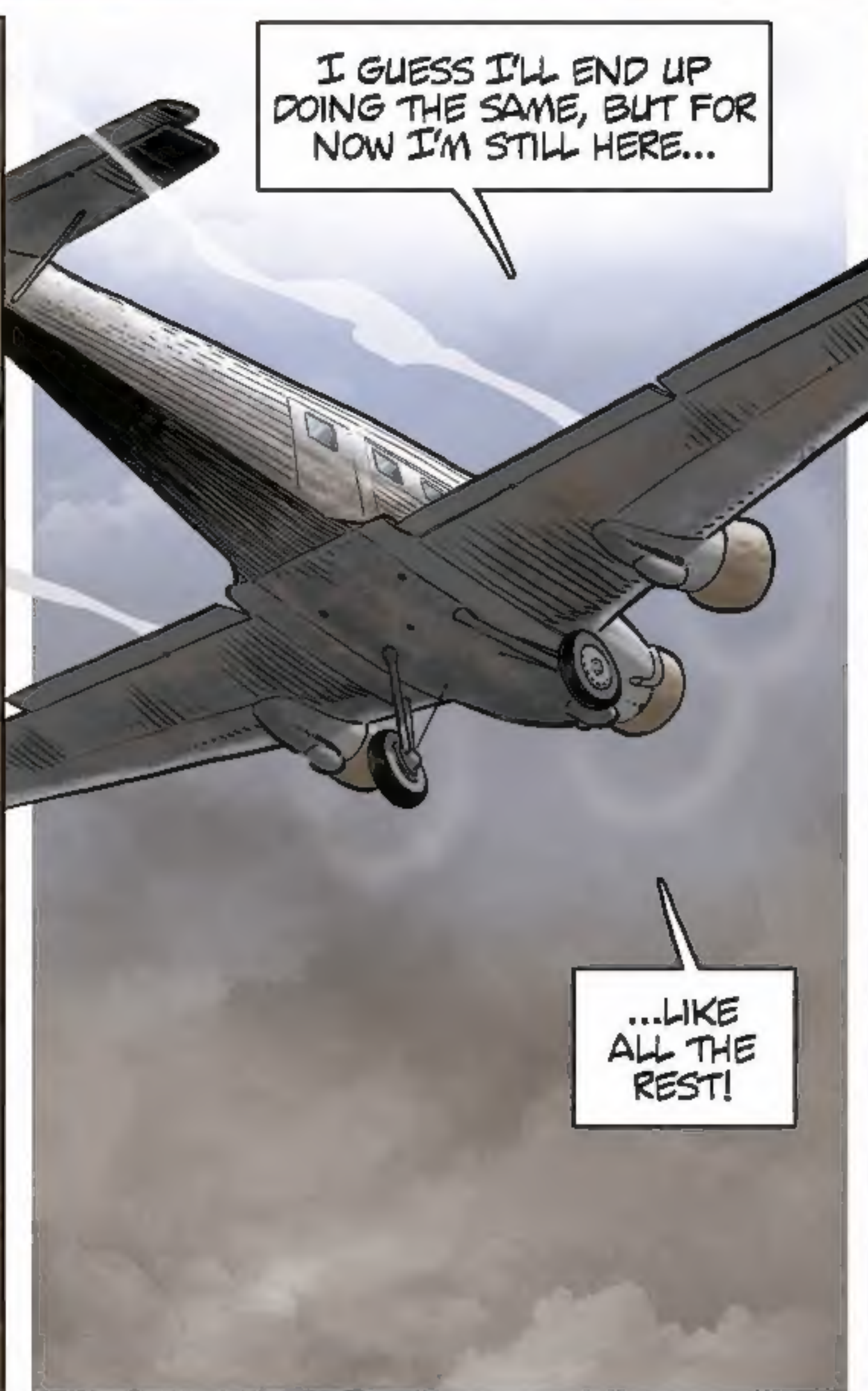
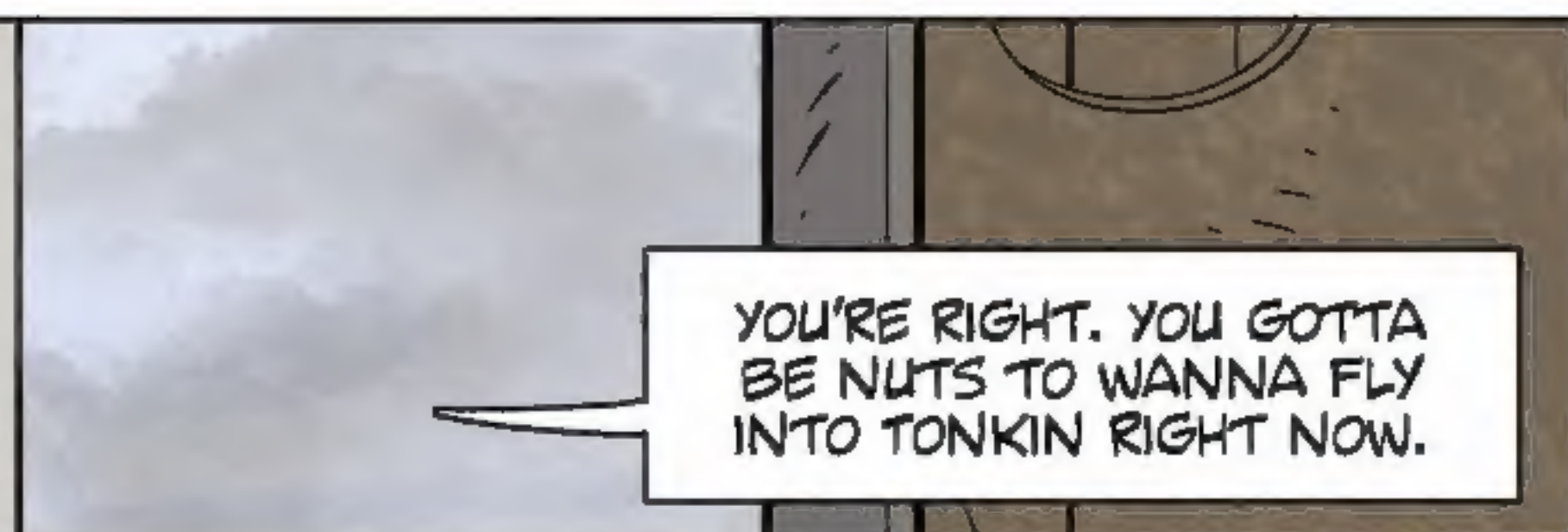


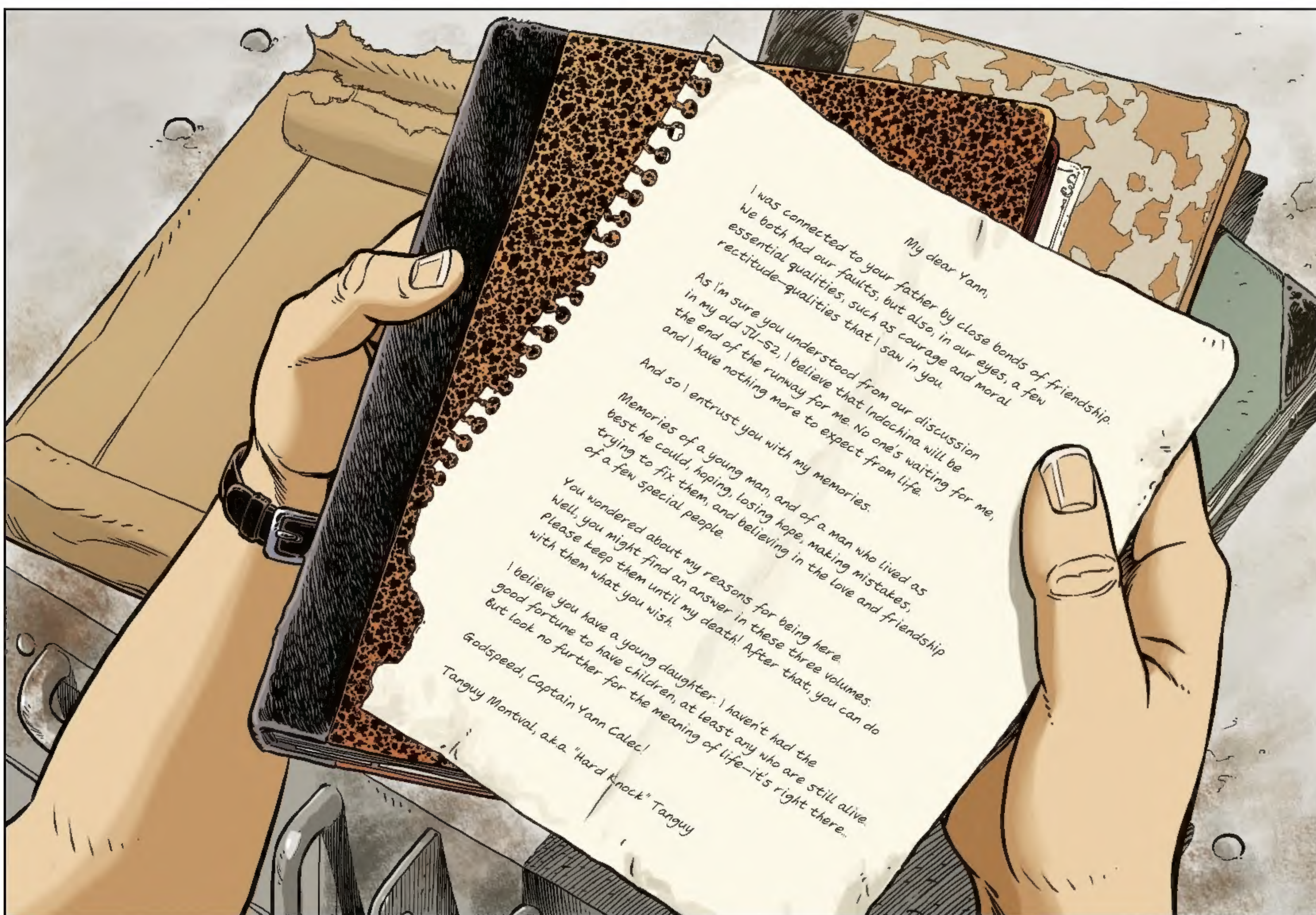
AND YOU, COMMANDER?

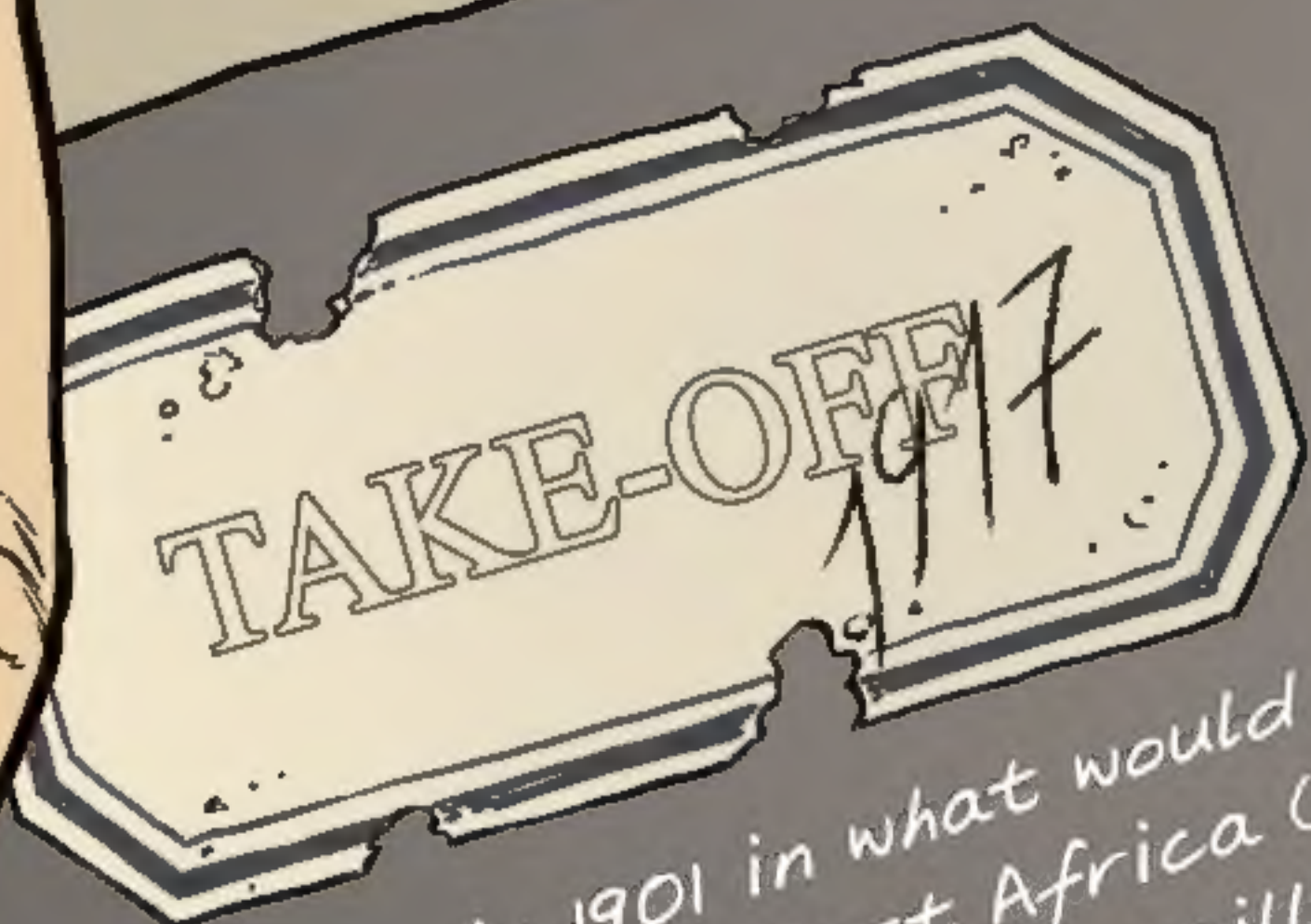
GOING OVER SO MANY THINGS IN MY HEAD: THE DURANDS, MY DAD, THE WHITE HMONG, ALL THE HORRIFIC THINGS WE'VE HAD TO DO IN THIS WAR. (2)

(1) A RADIO TRACKING DEVICE ALLOWING A PLANE TO BE PILOTED FROM THE GROUND. NASSAN AIRFIELD DIDN'T HAVE ONE AT THE TIME.

(2) SEE VOLUMES 7, 8, AND 9 OF TRAMP.







I was born in 1901 in what would be called German East Africa (1) up until the Treaty of Versailles, which sealed the fate of the German colonial empire after their defeat in 1918.



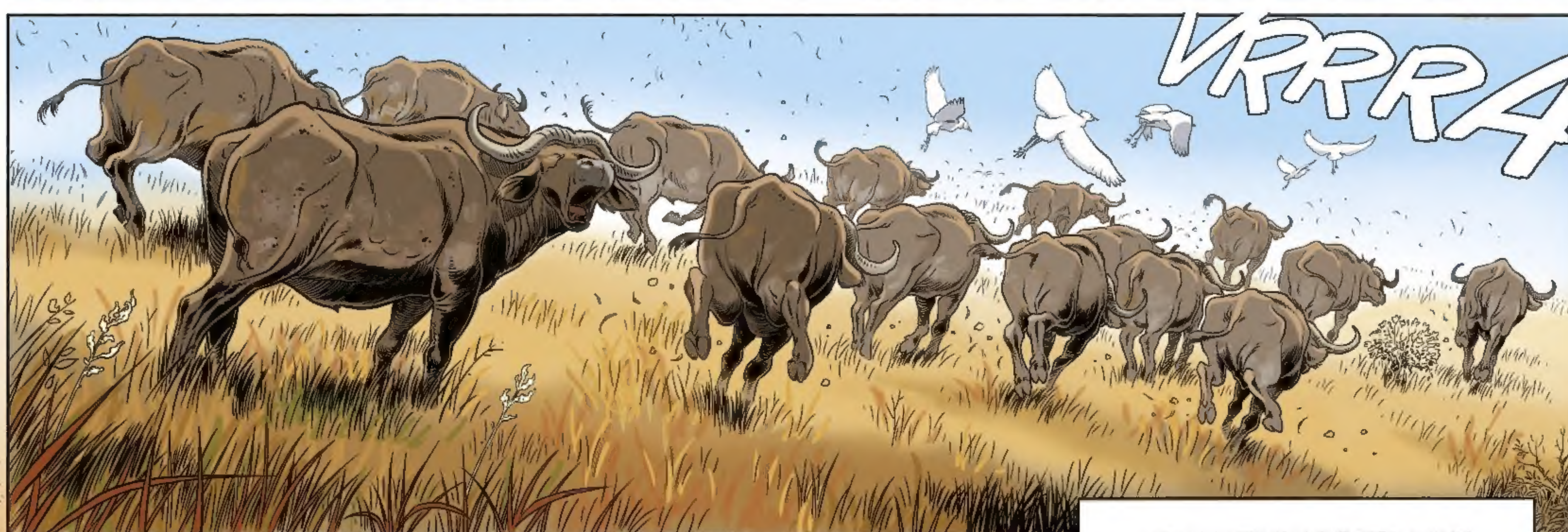
My given name is Josef. Eldest son of Lothar Schäfer, pastor of the Protestant mission of Kisanga, in the south of Tabora; and of Constance Montval, French teacher, submissive wife, and devoted mother of three sons and four daughters. My mother was a saint!



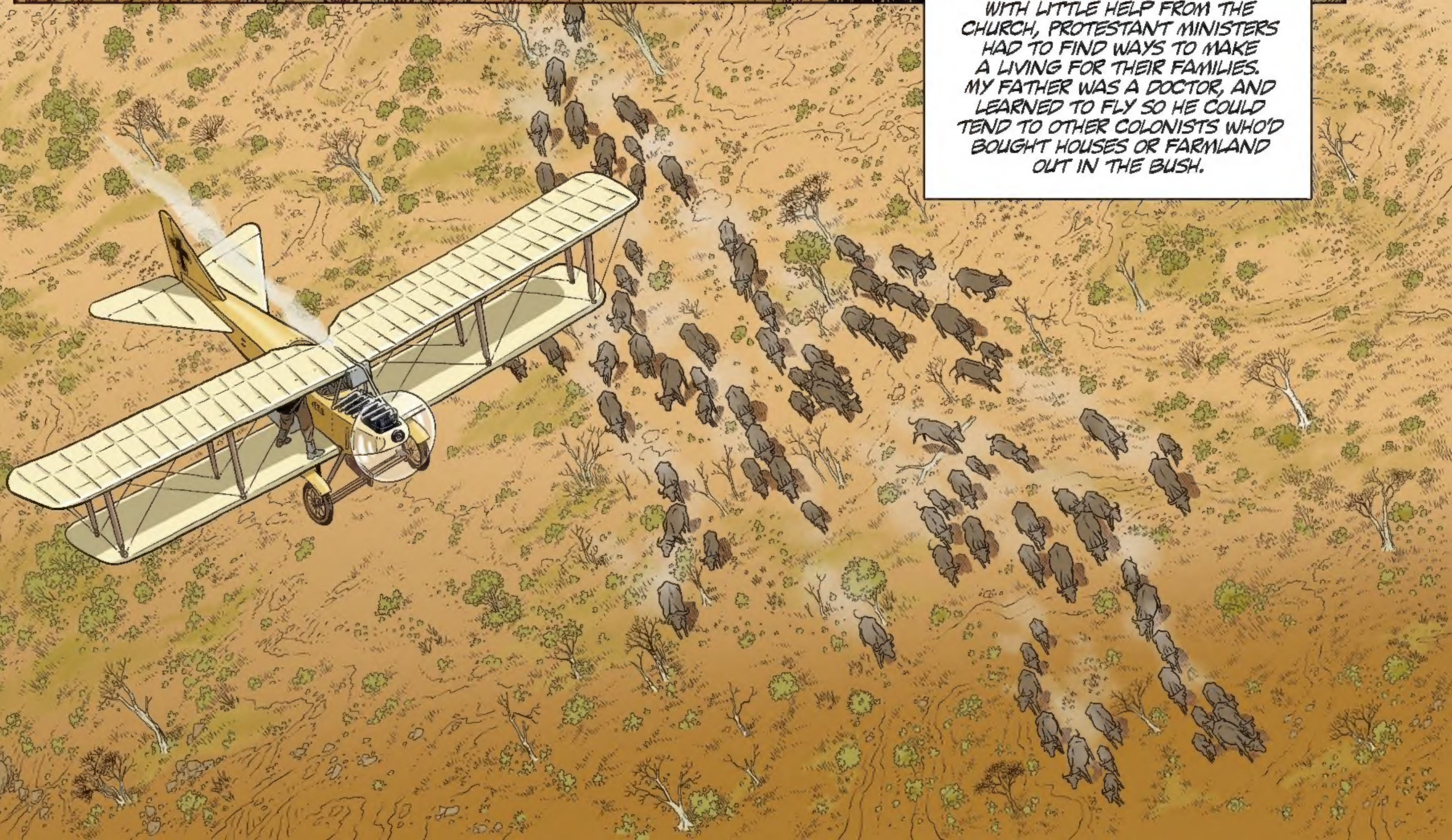
Following a divine revelation, Lothar Schäfer, a pious Professor of Medicine at the University of Heidelberg, abandoned his position to evangelize to the people of Africa according to Luther's principles. My mother followed him obediently, opening two schools close to the mission. As I said, a saint.

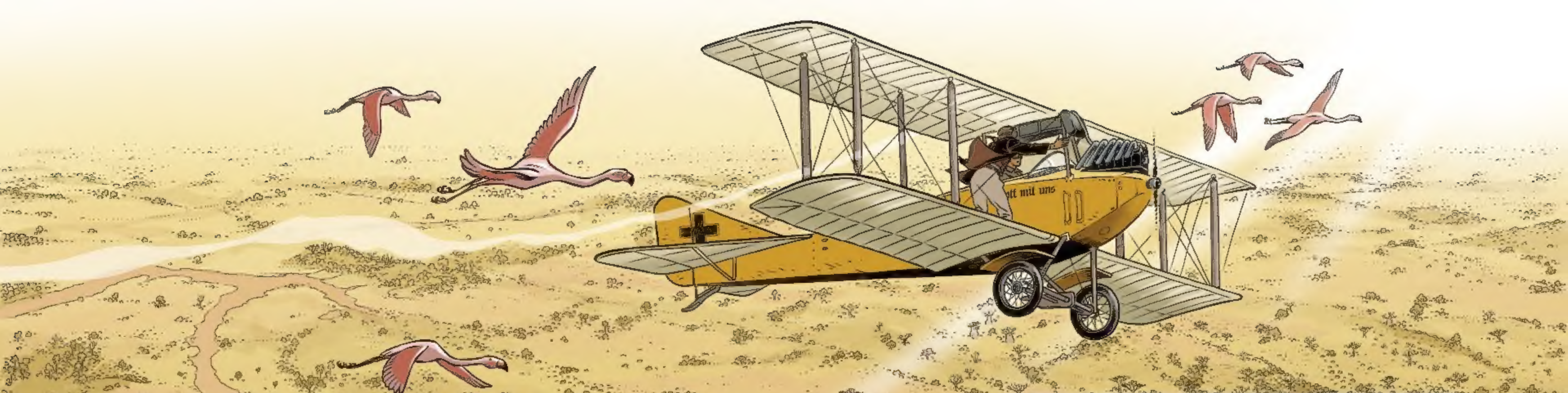


(1) LATER TO BECOME TANGANYIKA; NOW THE MAINLAND AREA OF TANZANIA.



WITH LITTLE HELP FROM THE CHURCH, PROTESTANT MINISTERS HAD TO FIND WAYS TO MAKE A LIVING FOR THEIR FAMILIES. MY FATHER WAS A DOCTOR, AND LEARNED TO FLY SO HE COULD TEND TO OTHER COLONISTS WHO'D BOUGHT HOUSES OR FARMLAND OUT IN THE BUSH.





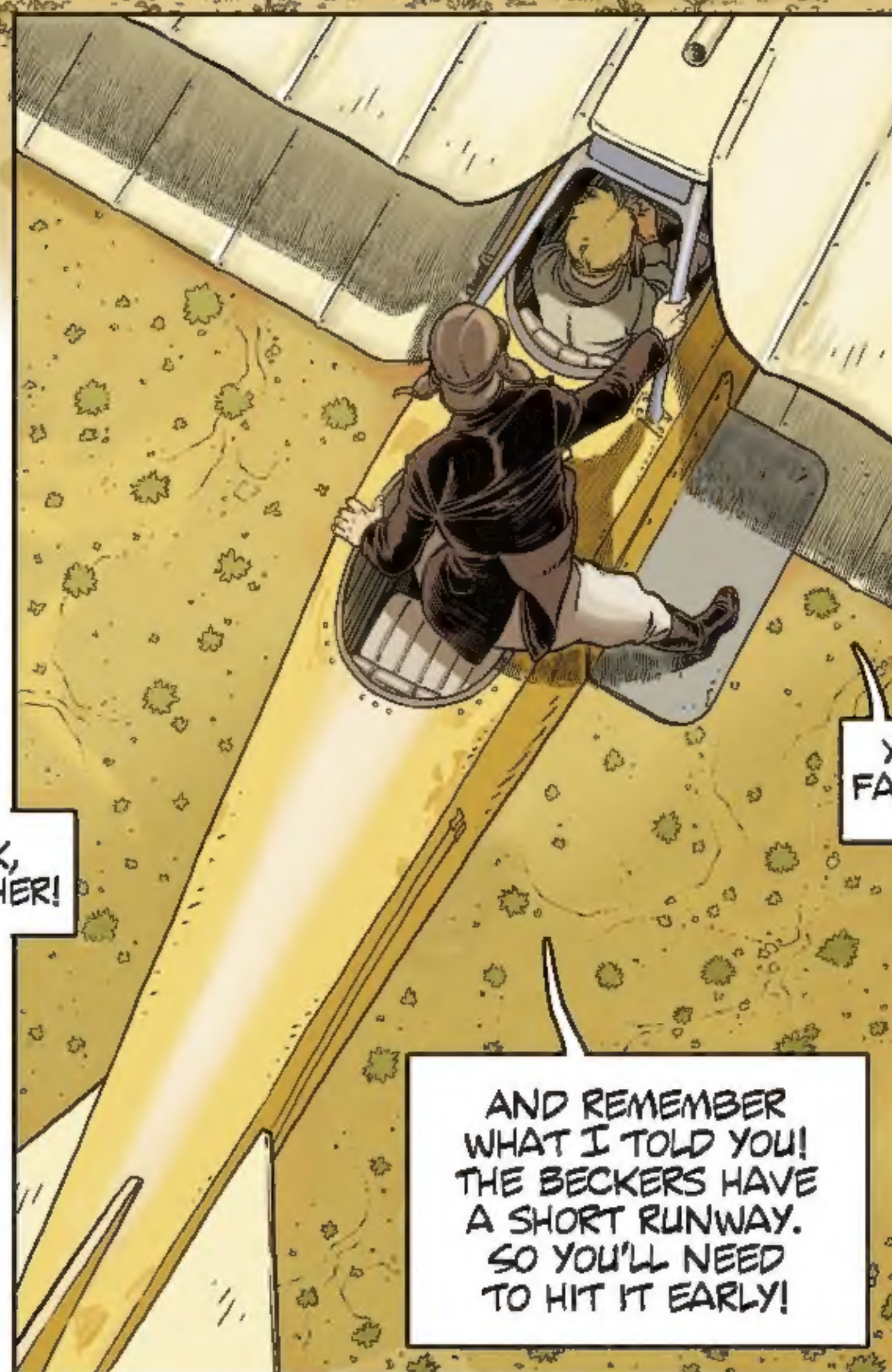
IN 1917, THIS WAS THE ONLY PLANE IN THE WHOLE OF GERMAN EAST AFRICA, A TWO-SEATER ALBATROS B.II BIPLANE. EVEN GENERAL VON LETTOW-VORBECK (1) --WHOSE ARMY WAS FIGHTING THE BELGIANS, BRITISH, AND PORTUGUESE--DIDN'T HAVE ONE. (2)

IT WAS PRETTY MUCH UNHEARD OF FOR ANYONE TO HAVE A PASSION FOR FLYING IN THOSE DAYS, BUT MY FATHER WAS SO CRAZY ABOUT IT, HE EVEN TAUGHT ME HOW TO FLY!



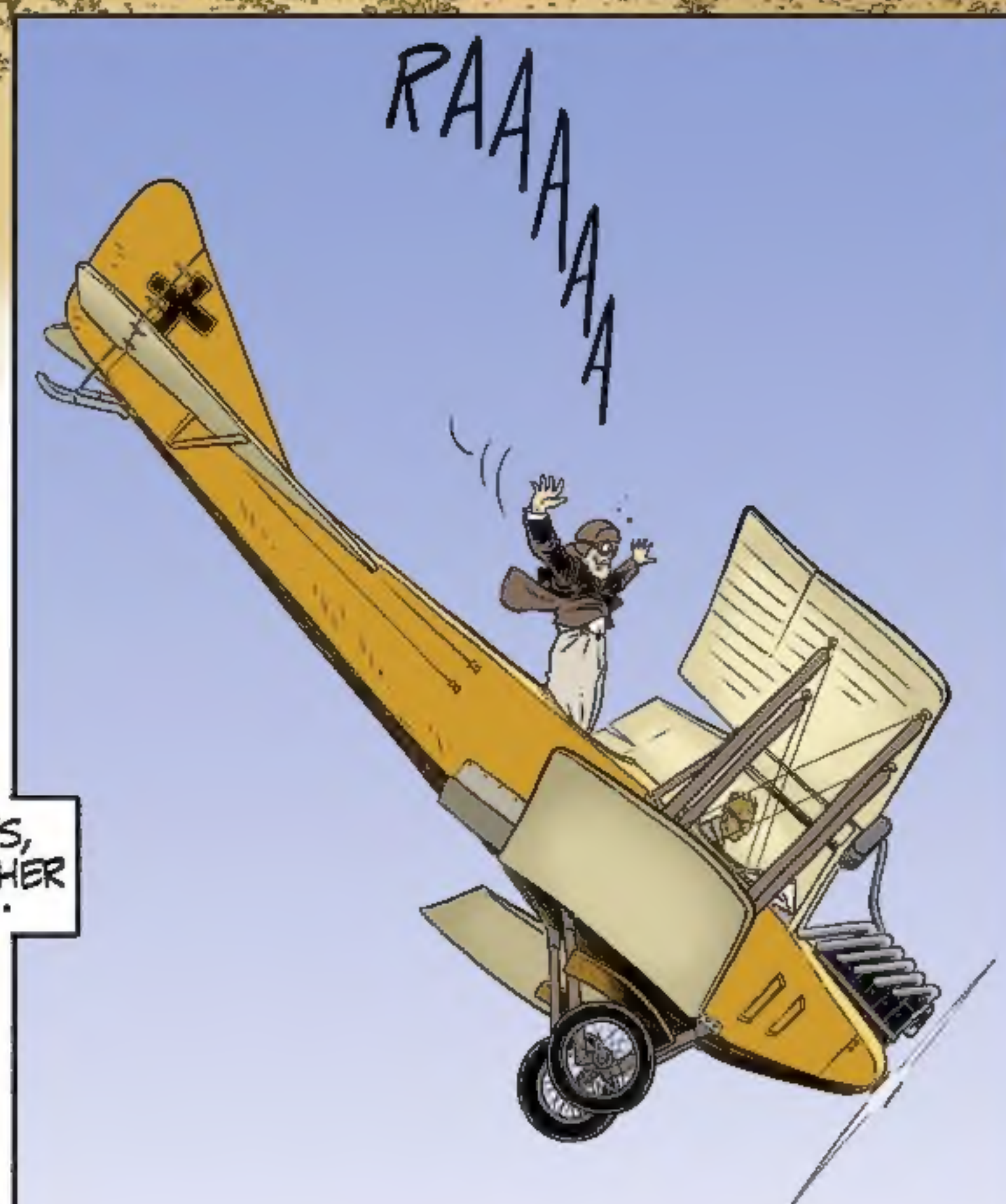
NEARLY THERE. START THE DESCENT, JOSEF!

OK, FATHER!



YES, FATHER...

AND REMEMBER WHAT I TOLD YOU! THE BECKERS HAVE A SHORT RUNWAY. SO YOU'LL NEED TO HIT IT EARLY!



IN FACT, I LEARNED FAR MORE FROM THOSE LESSONS WHEN I WAS IN THE REAR SEAT AND COULD WATCH WHAT MY FATHER WAS DOING, BECAUSE...

...NO MATTER HOW LOUD HE YELLED IN MY EAR, THE NOISE OF THE WIND AND THE ENGINE DROWNED OUT EVERYTHING HE SAID, AND I'D JUST RESPOND, "YES, FATHER. OK, FATHER."

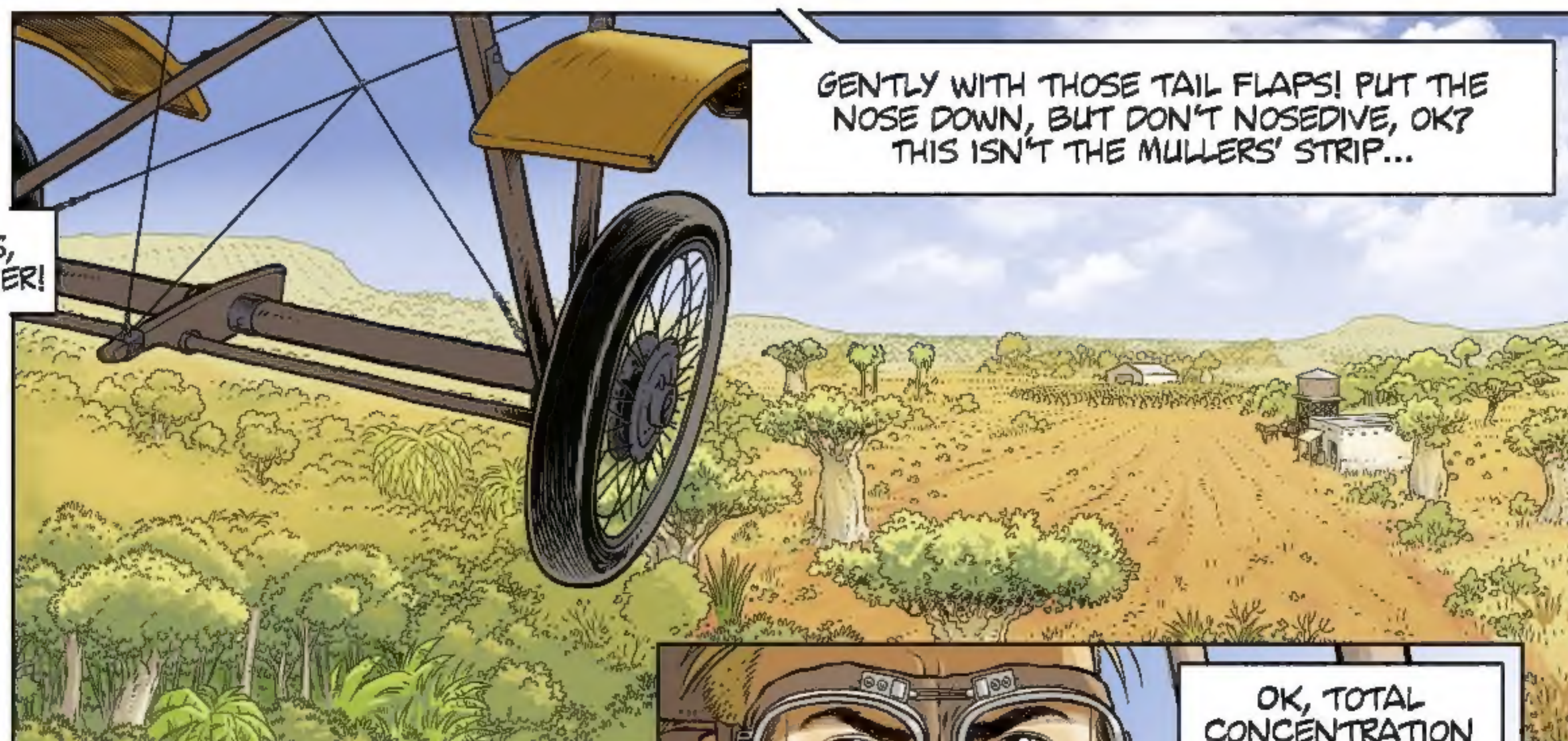
NOT THAT EARLY, YOU IDIOT! YOU ALMOST PITCHED ME OUT!

OK, FATHER!



MORE THROTTLE IF YOU WANT TO STAY AIRBORNE!

YES, FATHER!

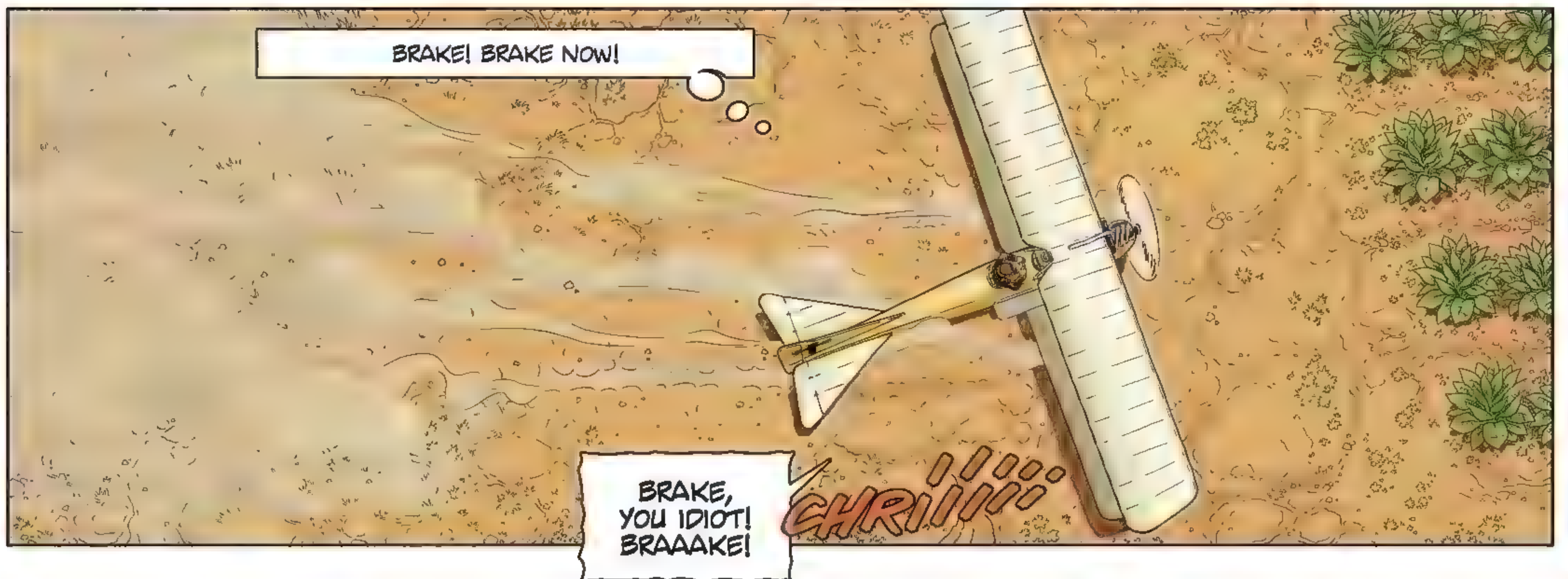
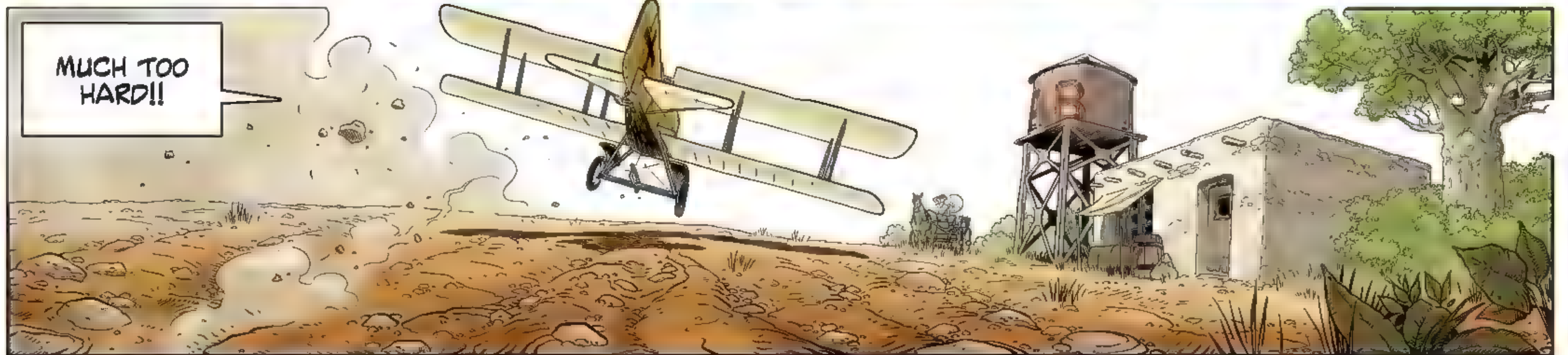
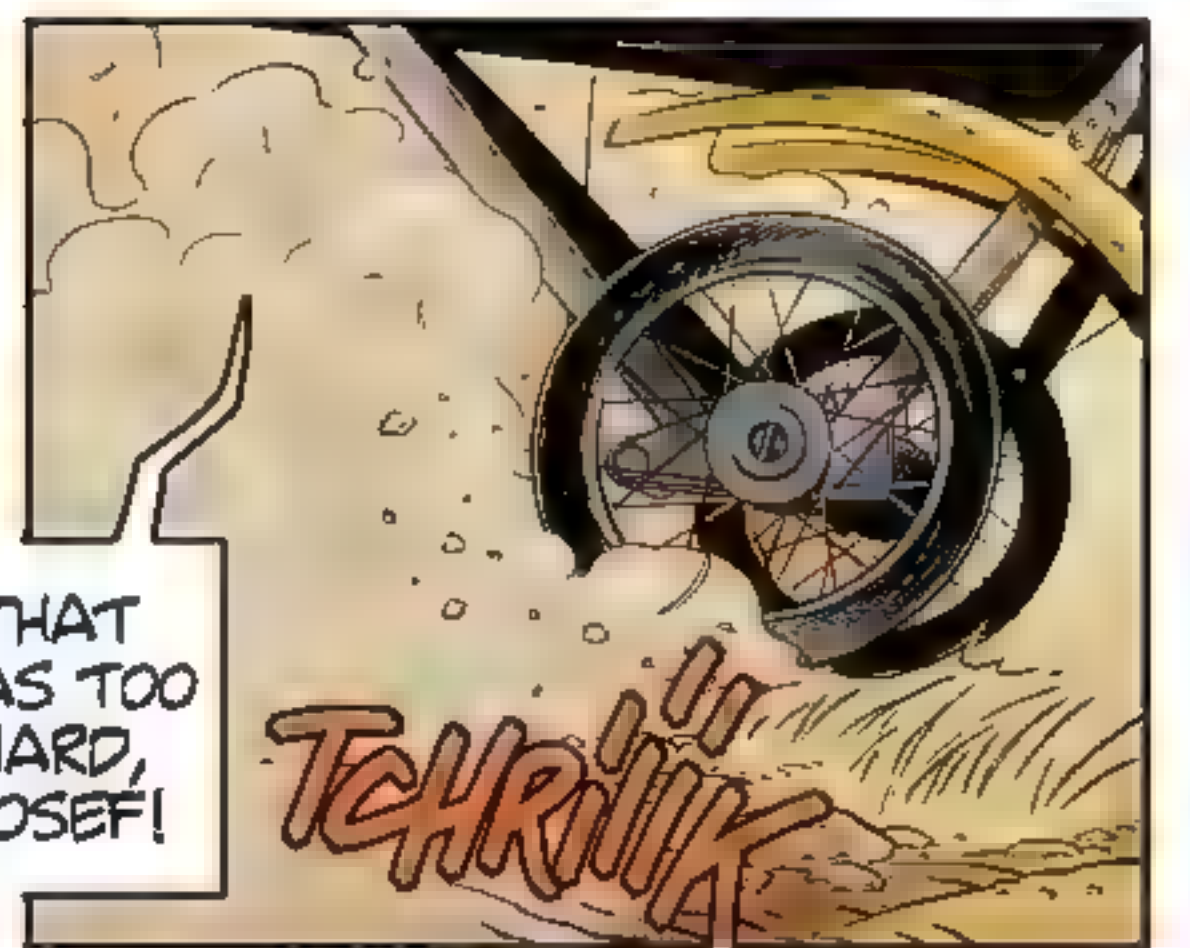
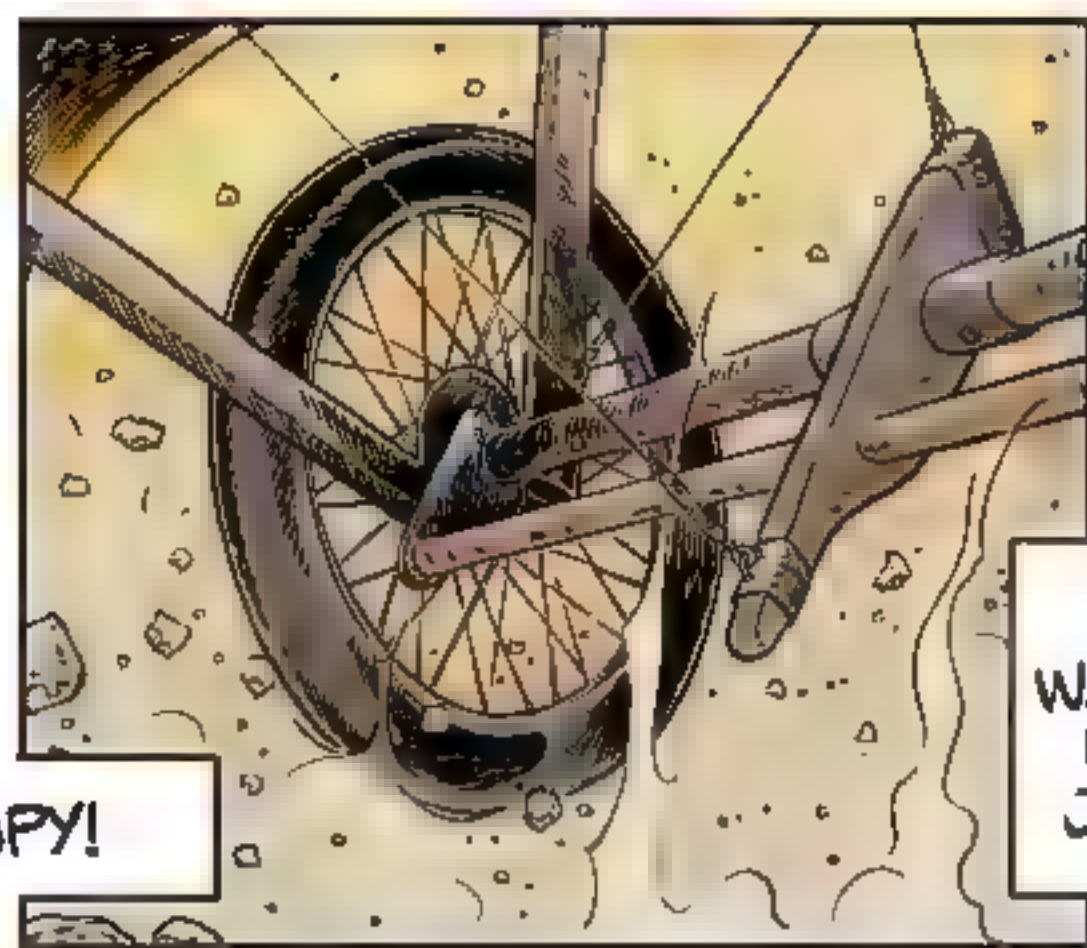
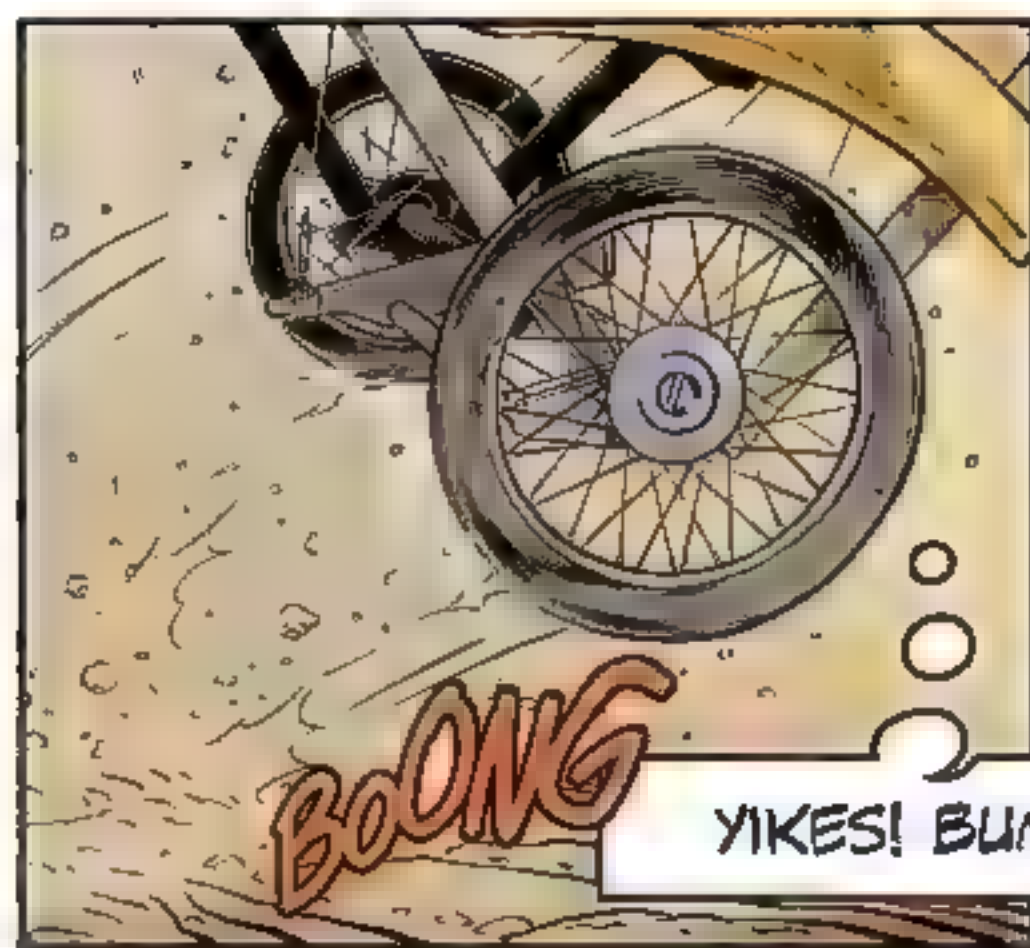
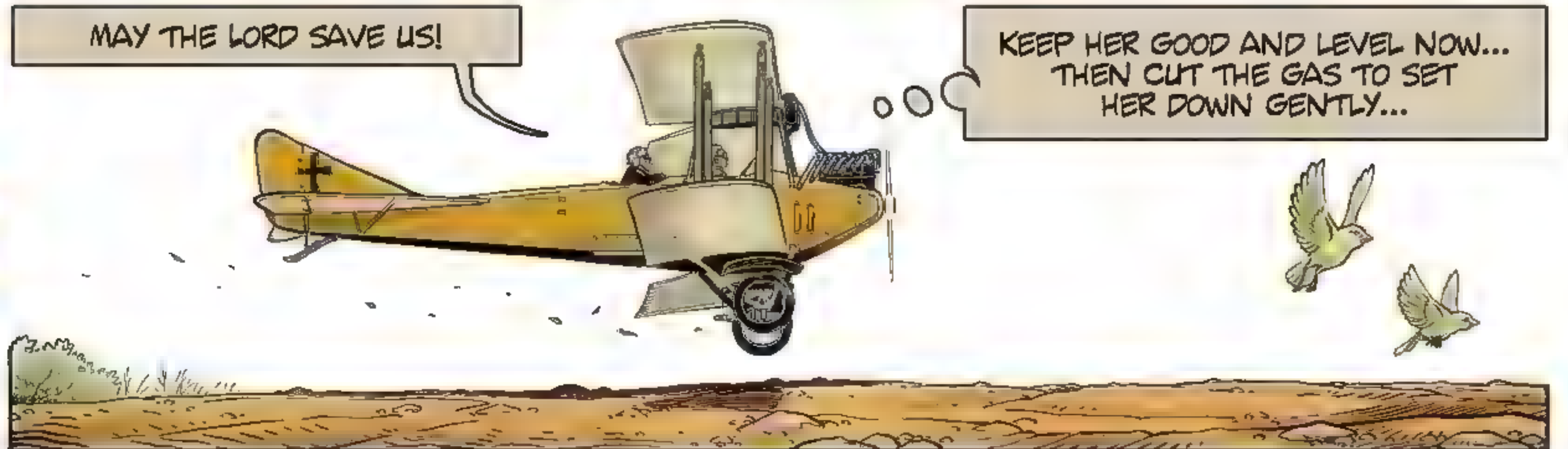
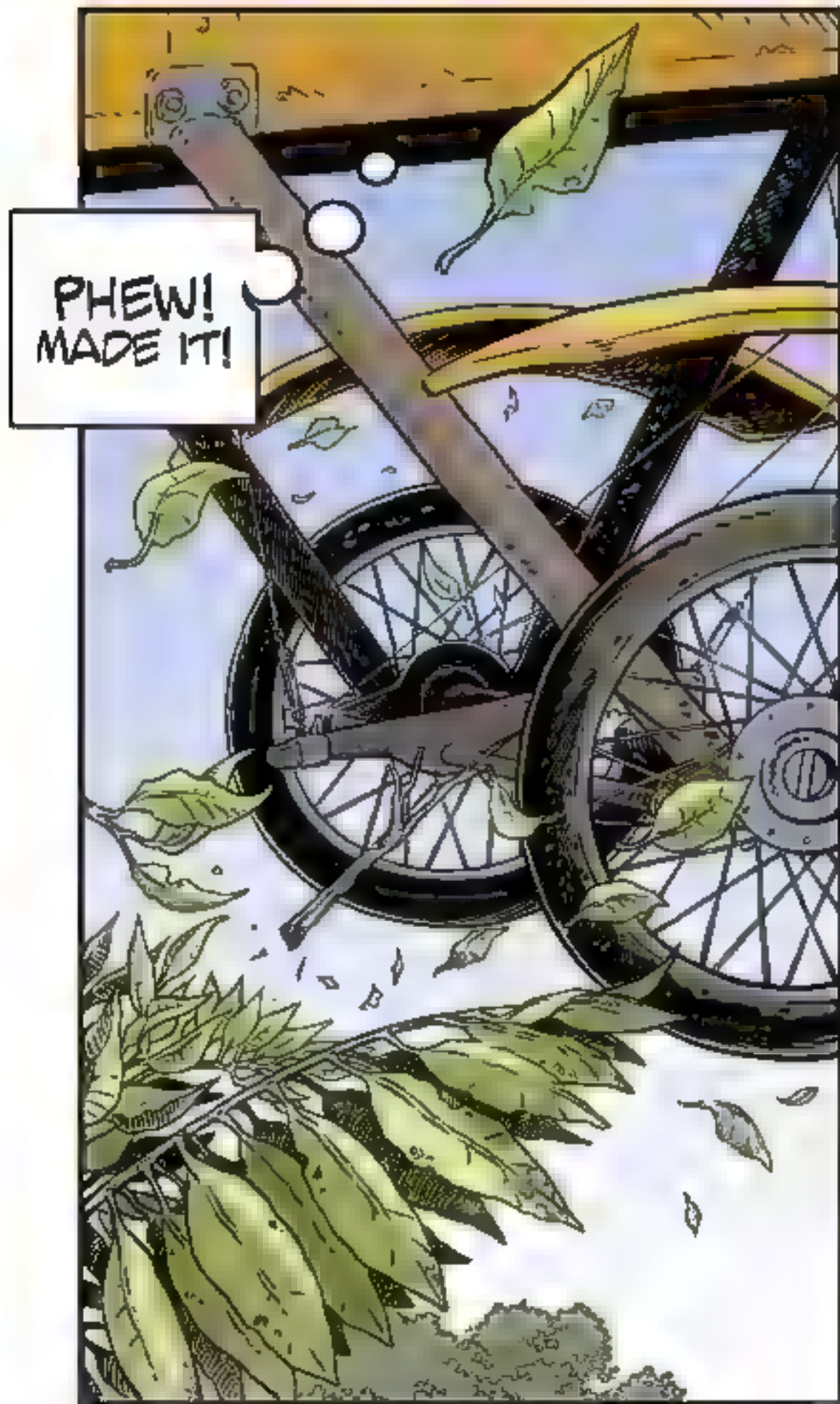
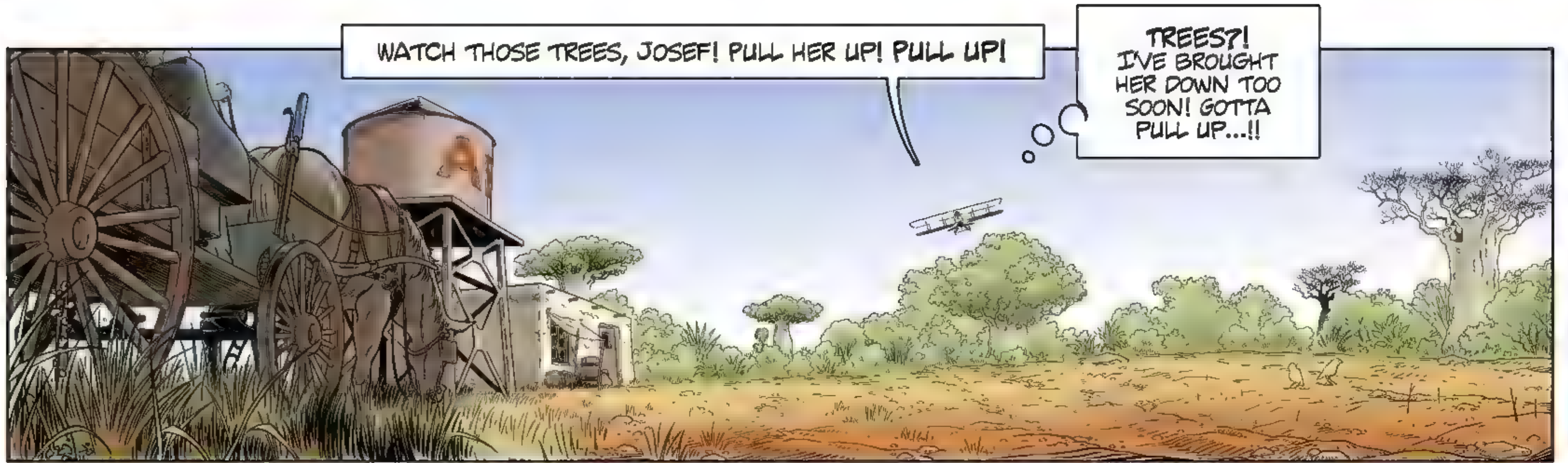


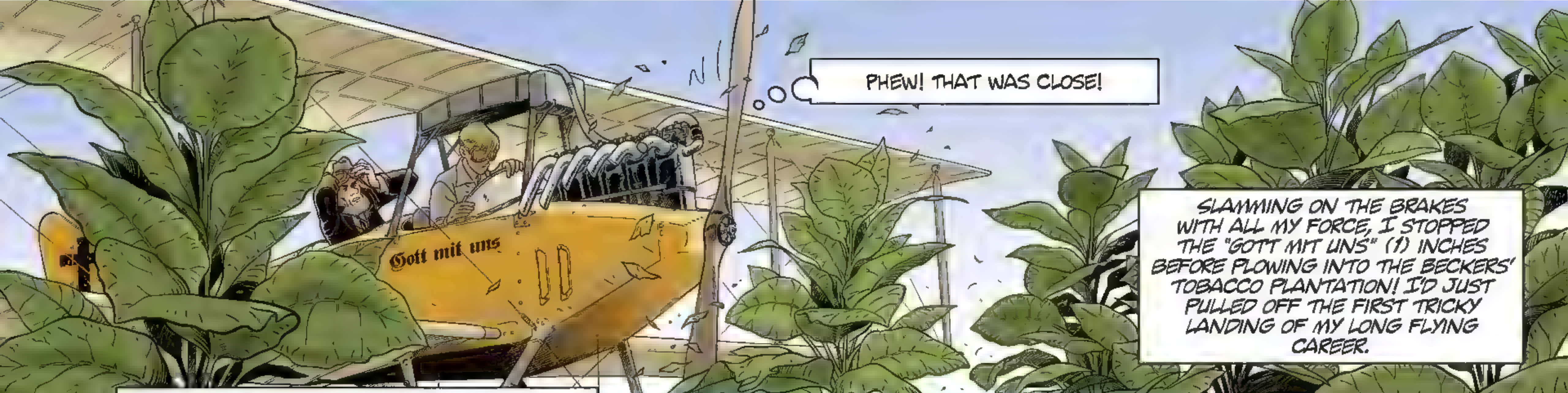
GENTLY WITH THOSE TAIL FLAPS! PUT THE NOSE DOWN, BUT DON'T NOSEDIVE, OK? THIS ISN'T THE MULLERS' STRIP...



OK, TOTAL CONCENTRATION NOW!

(1) COMMANDER OF THE GERMAN FORCES IN EAST AFRICA.
(2) THIS IS TRUE.





PHEW! THAT WAS CLOSE!

SLAMMING ON THE BRAKES WITH ALL MY FORCE, I STOPPED THE "GOTT MIT UNS" (1) INCHES BEFORE FLOWING INTO THE BECKERS' TOBACCO PLANTATION! I'D JUST PULLED OFF THE FIRST TRICKY LANDING OF MY LONG FLYING CAREER.

I DIDN'T KNOW IT AT THE TIME, BUT THAT DAY WAS DESTINED TO BE THE START OF A STRING OF FIRSTS IN MY LIFE.

I WON'T SAY WELL DONE, JOSEF.

YOU COULD HAVE BROKEN THE FRONT AXLE!

ARE YOU LISTENING?

OF COURSE, FATHER! THE FRONT AXLE.

JOSEF, WAS IT YOU AT THE CONTROLS OF THAT INFERNAL FLYING MACHINE?

YES, MRS. BECKER!

LIKE A HERO FROM GREEK MYTH, STREAKING ACROSS THE SKY. DON'T YOU THINK?

THERE'S NOTHING HEROIC ABOUT IT, MRS. BECKER. THE PLANE RIDES ON AIR, LIKE A BIRD. IT SIMPLY OBEYS THE LAWS OF PHYSICS.

BUT I ALSO KNOW HOW THE ENGINE WORKS, AND MOSTLY HOW TO TAKE IT APART...

I'M VERY IMPRESSED, JOSEF!

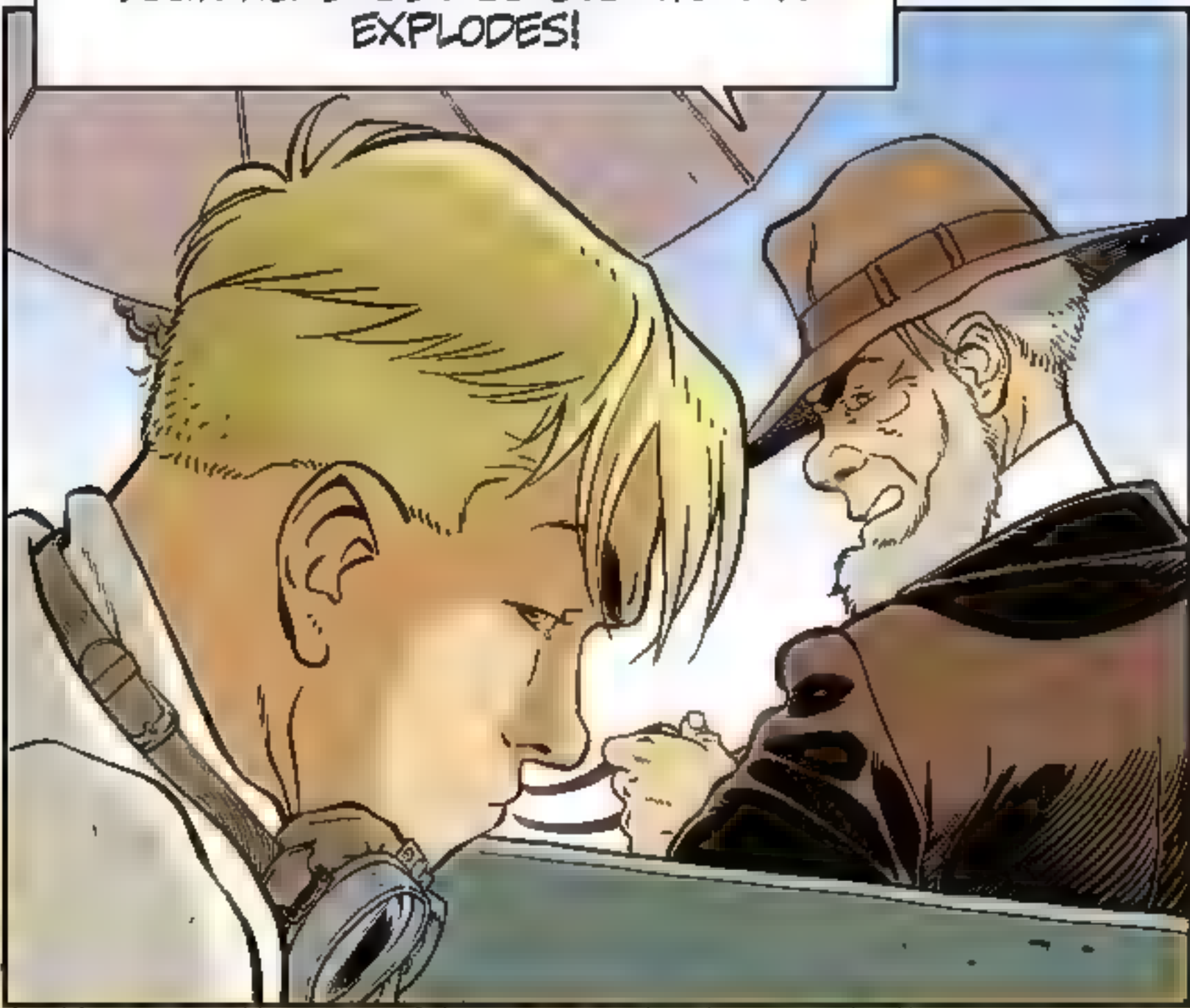
PLEASE, CALL ME SILKE. YOU MAY NOT BE A HERO YET, BUT YOU'VE CERTAINLY BECOME A MAN SINCE THE LAST TIME I SAW YOU.

HE'S STILL A BOY, MY DEAR. AND HE WILL CONTINUE TO ADDRESS YOU AS MRS. BECKER!

IF YOU SAY SO, PASTOR.

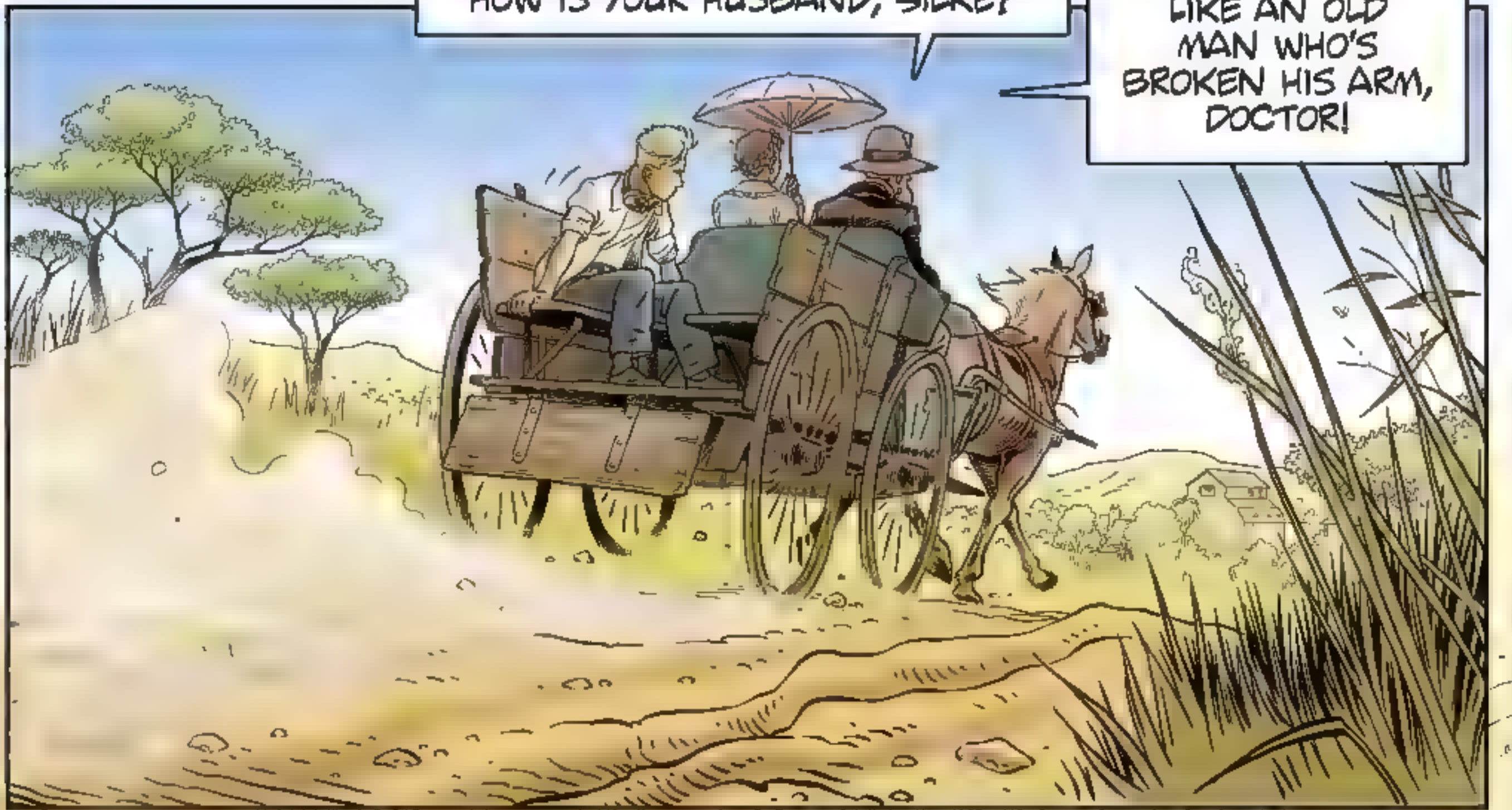
(1) "GOD BE WITH US" IN GERMAN.

AND DON'T YOU BE LETTING
YOUR HEAD GET SO BIG THAT IT
EXPLODES!



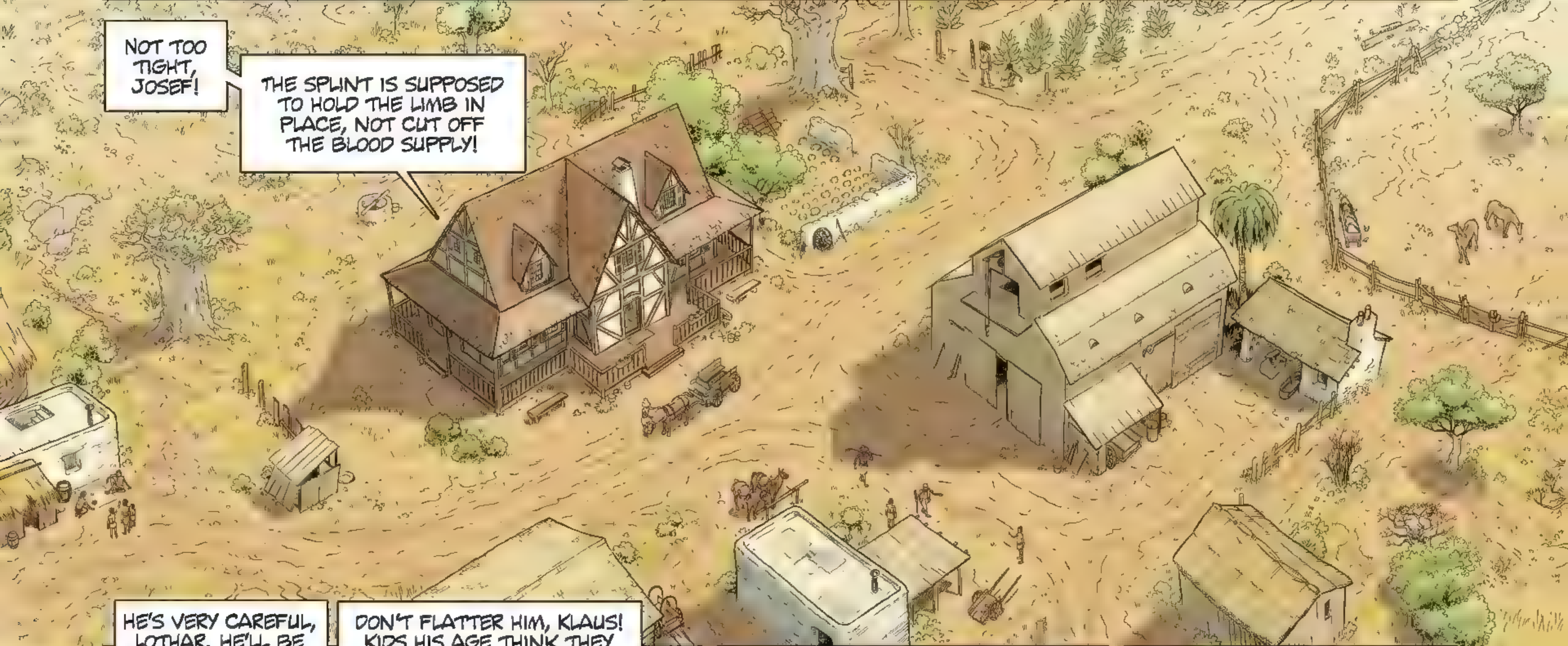
HOW IS YOUR HUSBAND, SILKE?

LIKE AN OLD
MAN WHO'S
BROKEN HIS ARM,
DOCTOR!



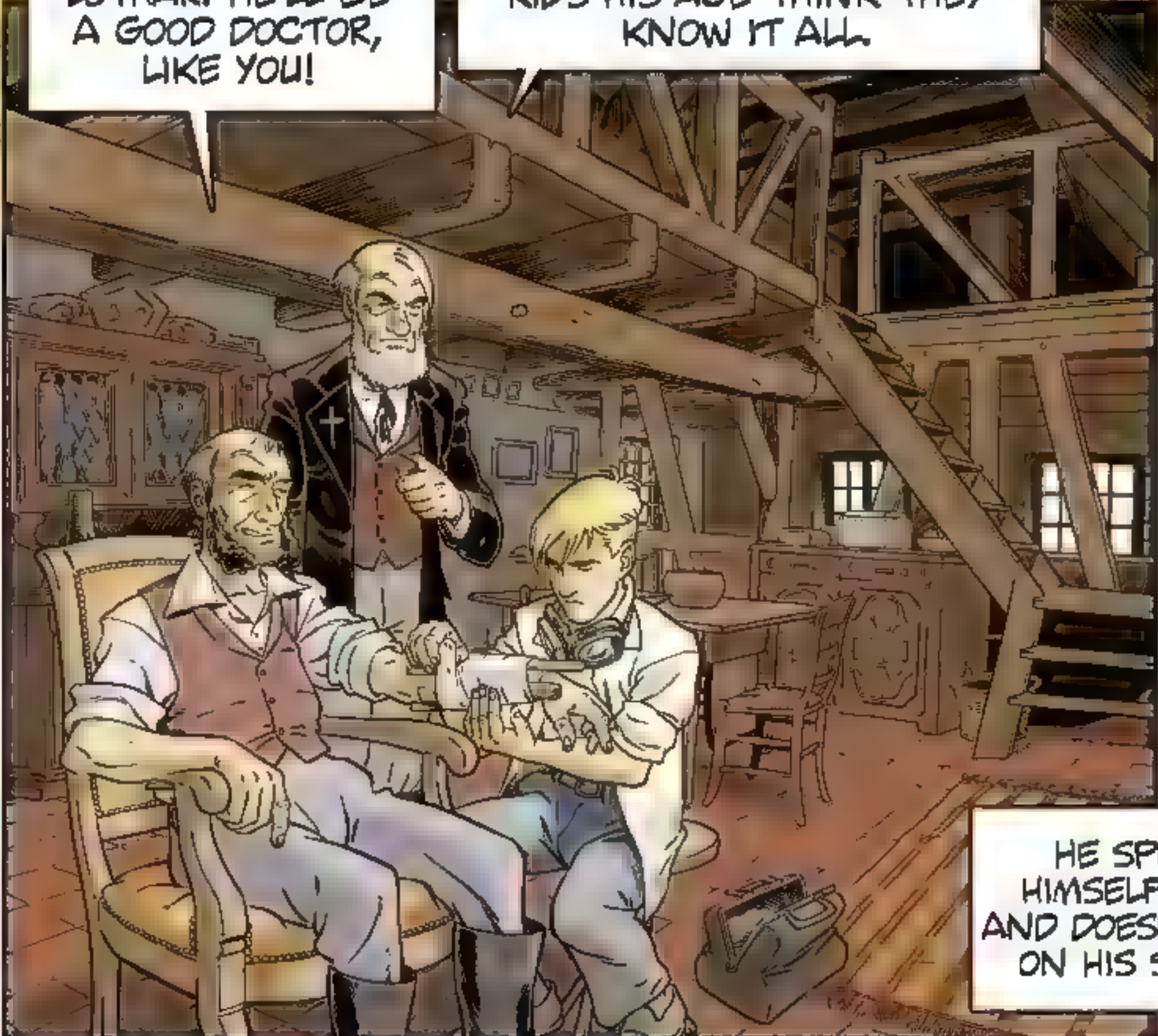
NOT TOO
TIGHT,
JOSEF!

THE SPLINT IS SUPPOSED
TO HOLD THE LIMB IN
PLACE, NOT CUT OFF
THE BLOOD SUPPLY!

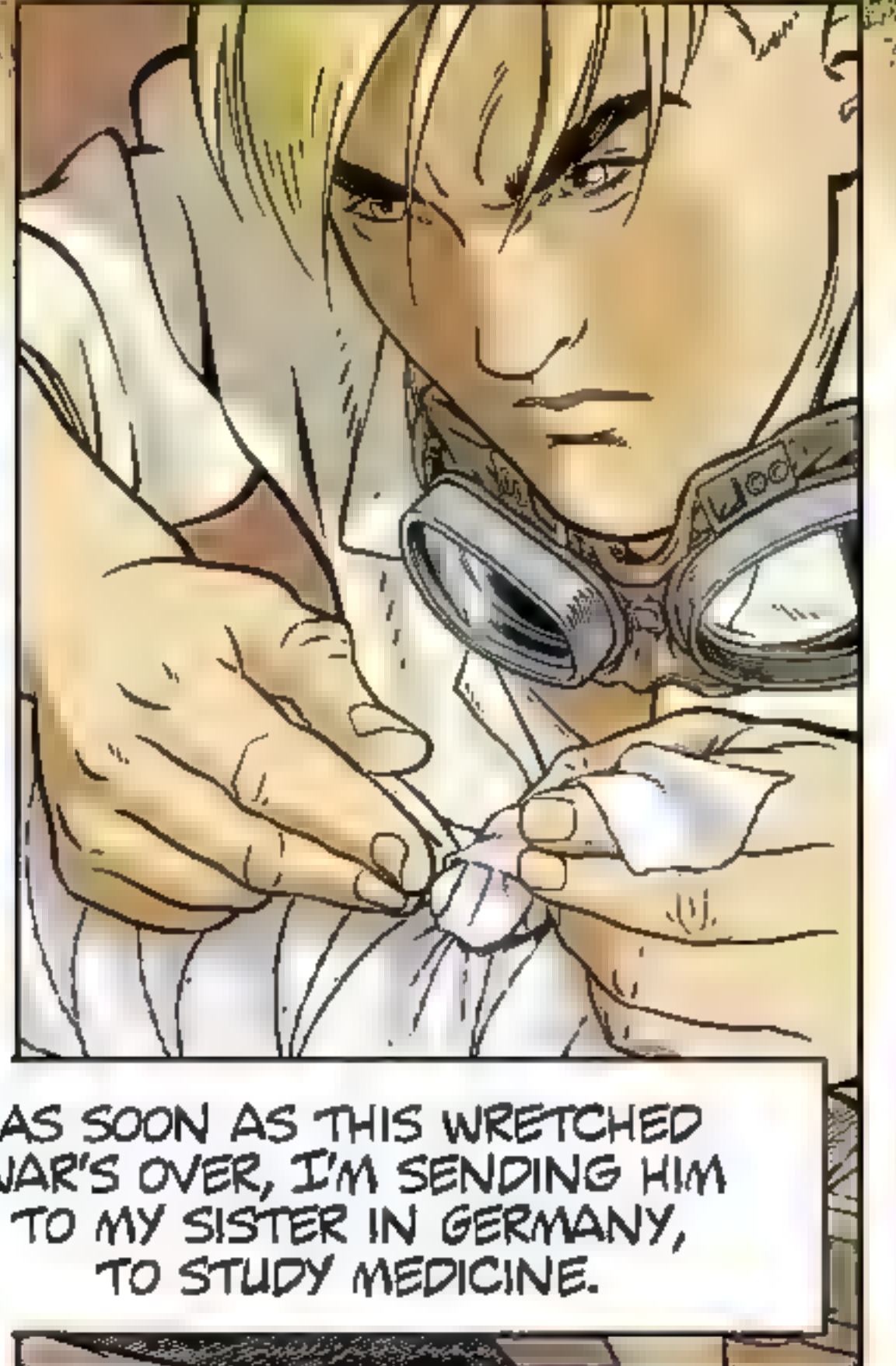


HE'S VERY CAREFUL,
LOTHAR. HE'LL BE
A GOOD DOCTOR,
LIKE YOU!

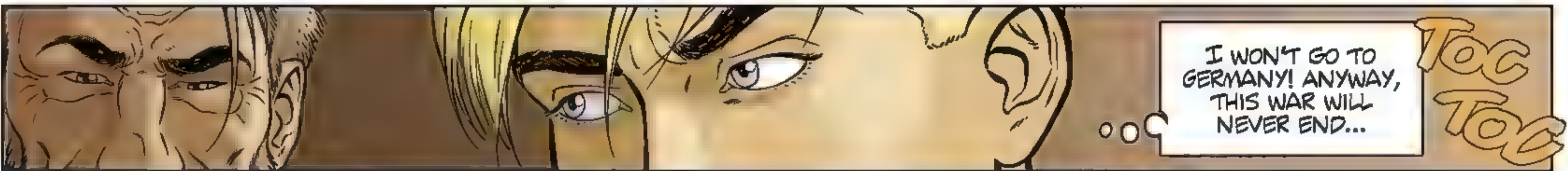
DON'T FLATTER HIM, KLAUS!
KIDS HIS AGE THINK THEY
KNOW IT ALL.



HE SPREADS
HIMSELF THINLY
AND DOESN'T FOCUS
ON HIS STUDIES.

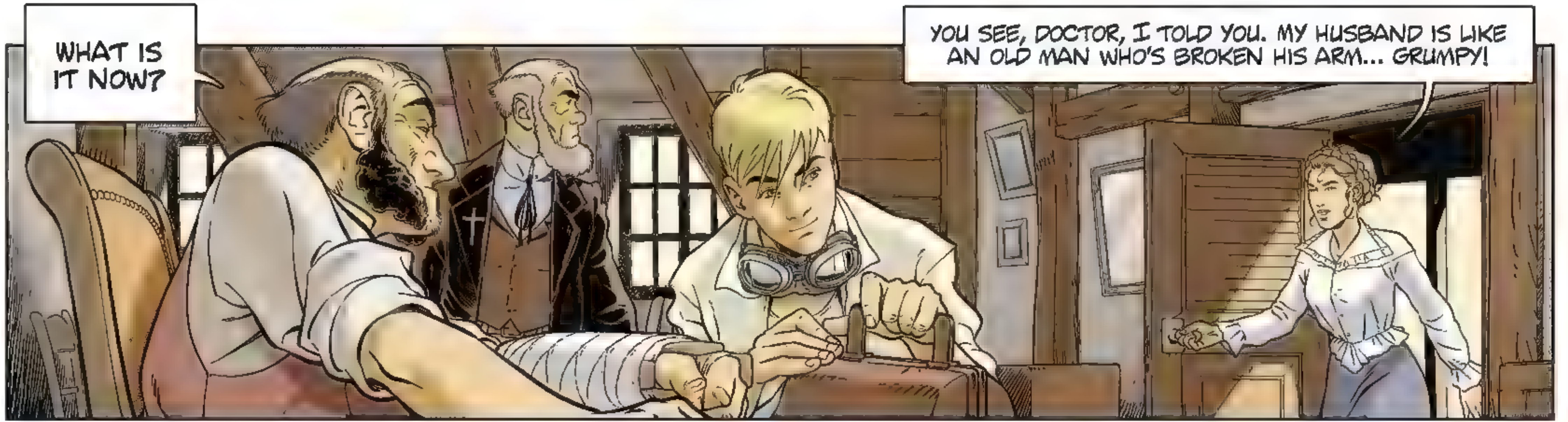


AS SOON AS THIS WRETCHED
WAR'S OVER, I'M SENDING HIM
TO MY SISTER IN GERMANY,
TO STUDY MEDICINE.



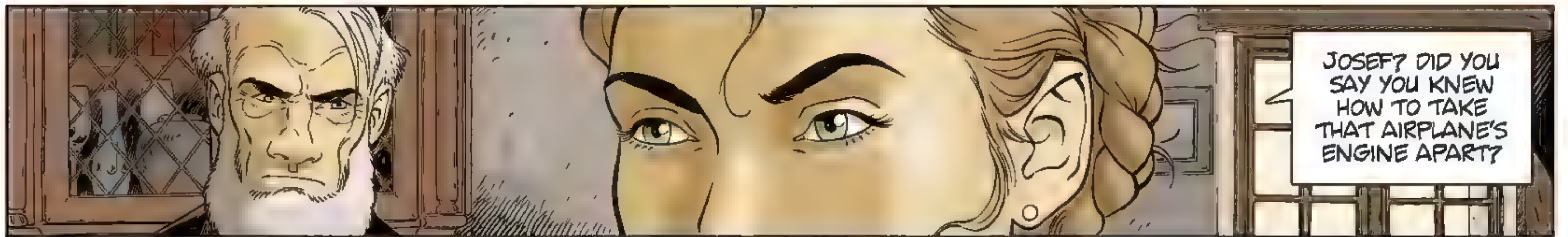
I WON'T GO TO
GERMANY! ANYWAY,
THIS WAR WILL
NEVER END...

**Toc
Toc**



WHAT IS IT NOW?

YOU SEE, DOCTOR, I TOLD YOU. MY HUSBAND IS LIKE AN OLD MAN WHO'S BROKEN HIS ARM... GRUMPY!



JOSEF? DID YOU SAY YOU KNEW HOW TO TAKE THAT AIRPLANE'S ENGINE APART?



YES, MRS. BECKER. WELL... SOME OF IT, ANYWAY.

COULD YOU REPAIR A TRACTOR ENGINE?



IF I COULDN'T MANAGE TO FIX IT, SILKE, HOW DO YOU THINK A KID'S GONNA DO IT? THE THING'S KAPUT. IN ANY CASE, IT'S OF NO USE TO US ANYMORE.

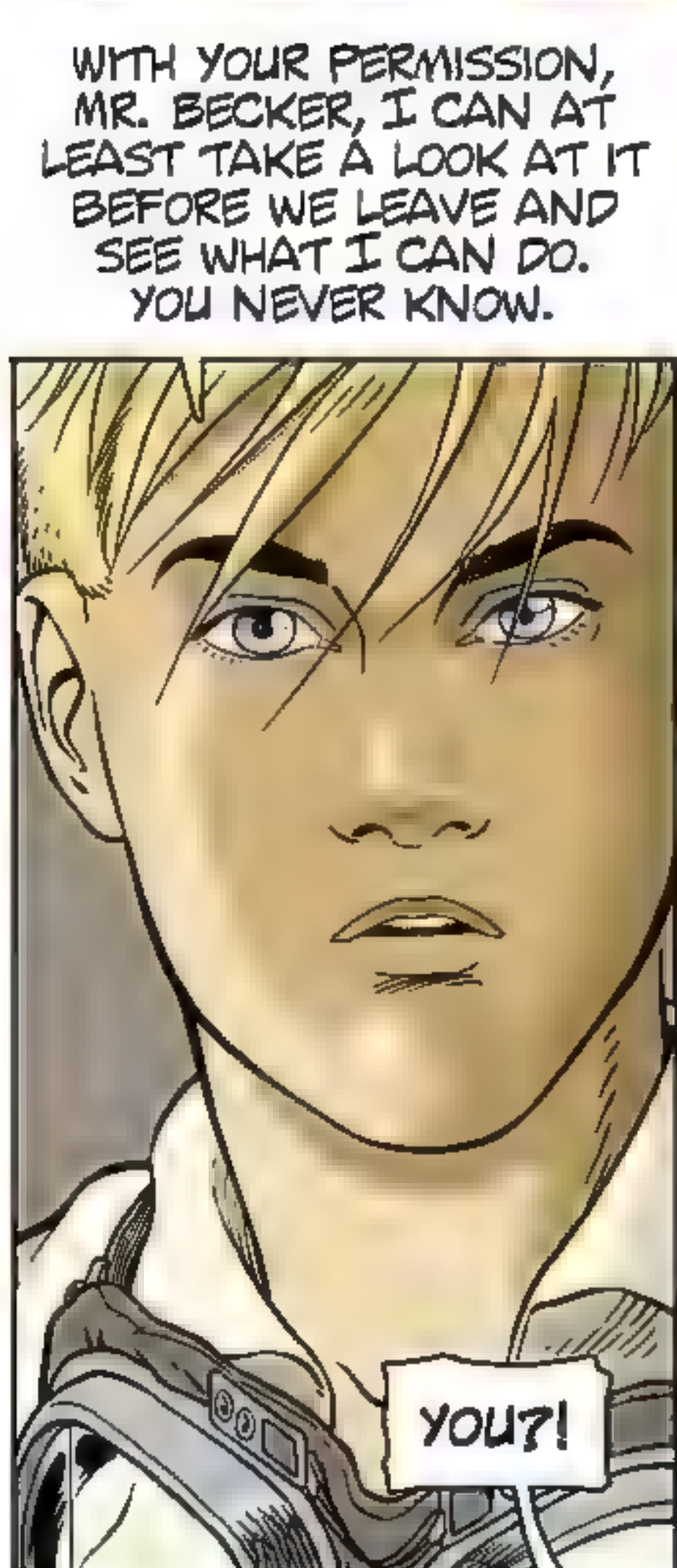
WHY NOT? IT'S SERVED US WELL ENOUGH IN THE PAST...



...AND WE STILL HAVE TO CLEAR AND PLOUGH THE LAND BEFORE SPRING...

THAT'S THE NEGROES' JOB!

BUT THE BEST ONES HAVE ALREADY BEEN DRAFTED AS ASKARIS (1) IN THE SCHUTZTRUPPE!



WITH YOUR PERMISSION, MR. BECKER, I CAN AT LEAST TAKE A LOOK AT IT BEFORE WE LEAVE AND SEE WHAT I CAN DO. YOU NEVER KNOW.

YOU?!



JOSEF! YOU--

LEAVE IT, LOTHARI!

IF YOU THINK YOU CAN DO BETTER THAN ME, KID...



SHOW HIM WHERE IT IS, SILKE. AND BRING US SOME COLD DRINKS!

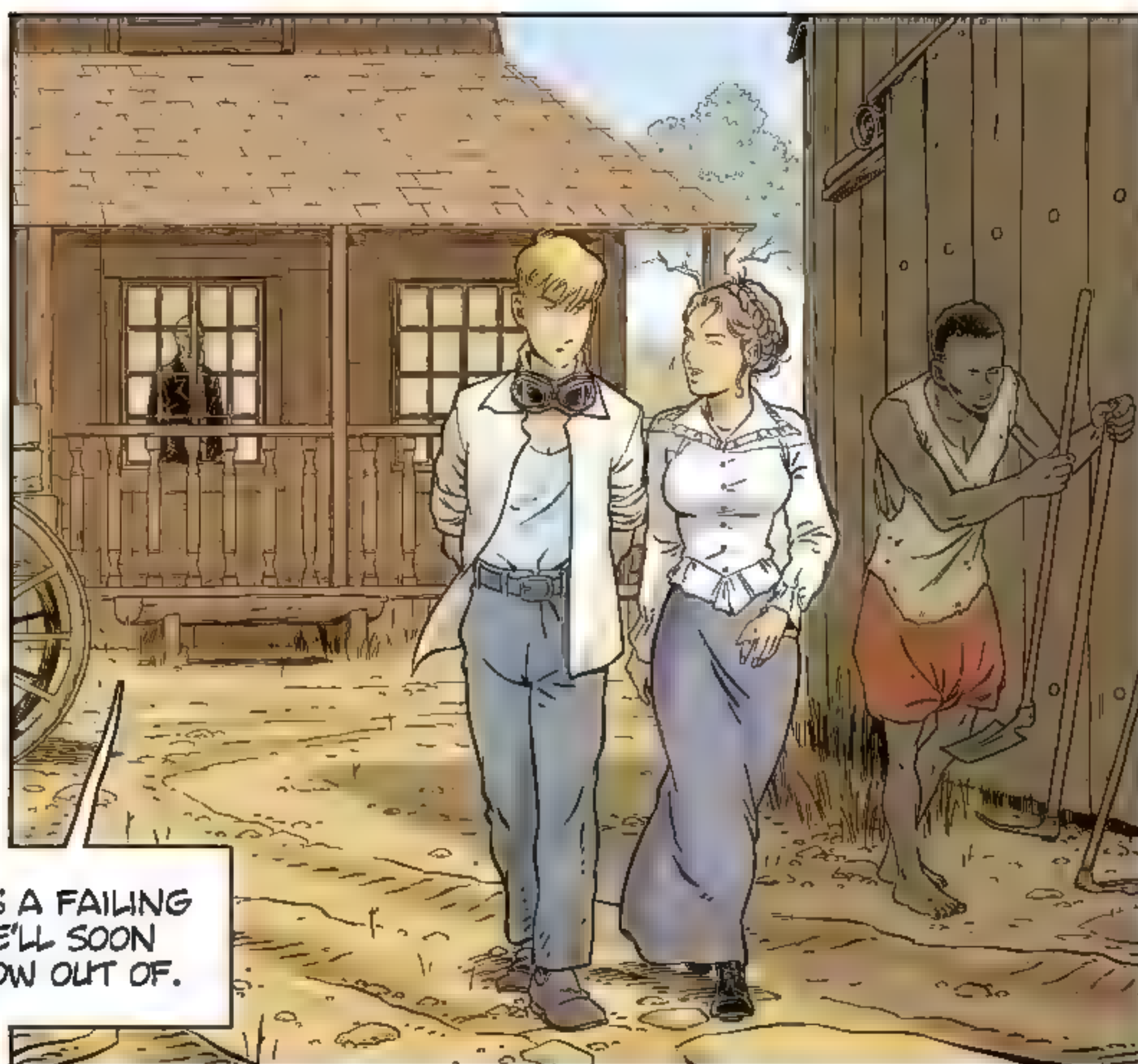


(1) NATIVES FIGHTING FOR THE GERMANS.



YOU WERE RIGHT ABOUT YOUR SON, LOTHAR. WHAT ARROGANCE TO THINK HE CAN SUCCEED WHERE I FAILED!

I'D SAY IT'S MORE A KIND OF NAIVETE. THE INEXPERIENCE OF YOUTH...



IT'S A FAILING HE'LL SOON GROW OUT OF.



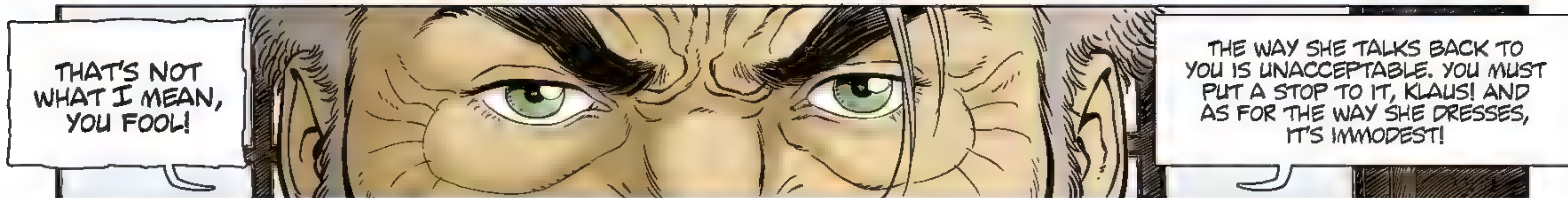
I'LL SEE TO THAT!



BY THE WAY, I FEEL I MUST TELL YOU, SPEAKING AS YOUR PASTOR...

...THAT YOUR WIFE'S BEHAVIOR IS UNBECOMING OF A CHRISTIAN WOMAN, KLAUS!

BUT PASTOR, I... SHE CAN'T MAKE IT TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY MORNING. IT'S MORE THAN THREE HOURS' RIDE BY CARRIAGE, AND--



THAT'S NOT WHAT I MEAN, YOU FOOL!

THE WAY SHE TALKS BACK TO YOU IS UNACCEPTABLE. YOU MUST PUT A STOP TO IT, KLAUS! AND AS FOR THE WAY SHE DRESSES, IT'S IMMODEST!



HER... HER CLOTHES? BUT THEY'RE QUITE NORMAL FOR A--

YES, BUT SHE WEARS THEM AS IF SHE WANTS TO MAKE HERSELF ATTRACTIVE. IT'S THE SAME WITH HER HAIR. DON'T YOU REMEMBER PAUL'S ADVICE TO THE PHILIPPIANS?



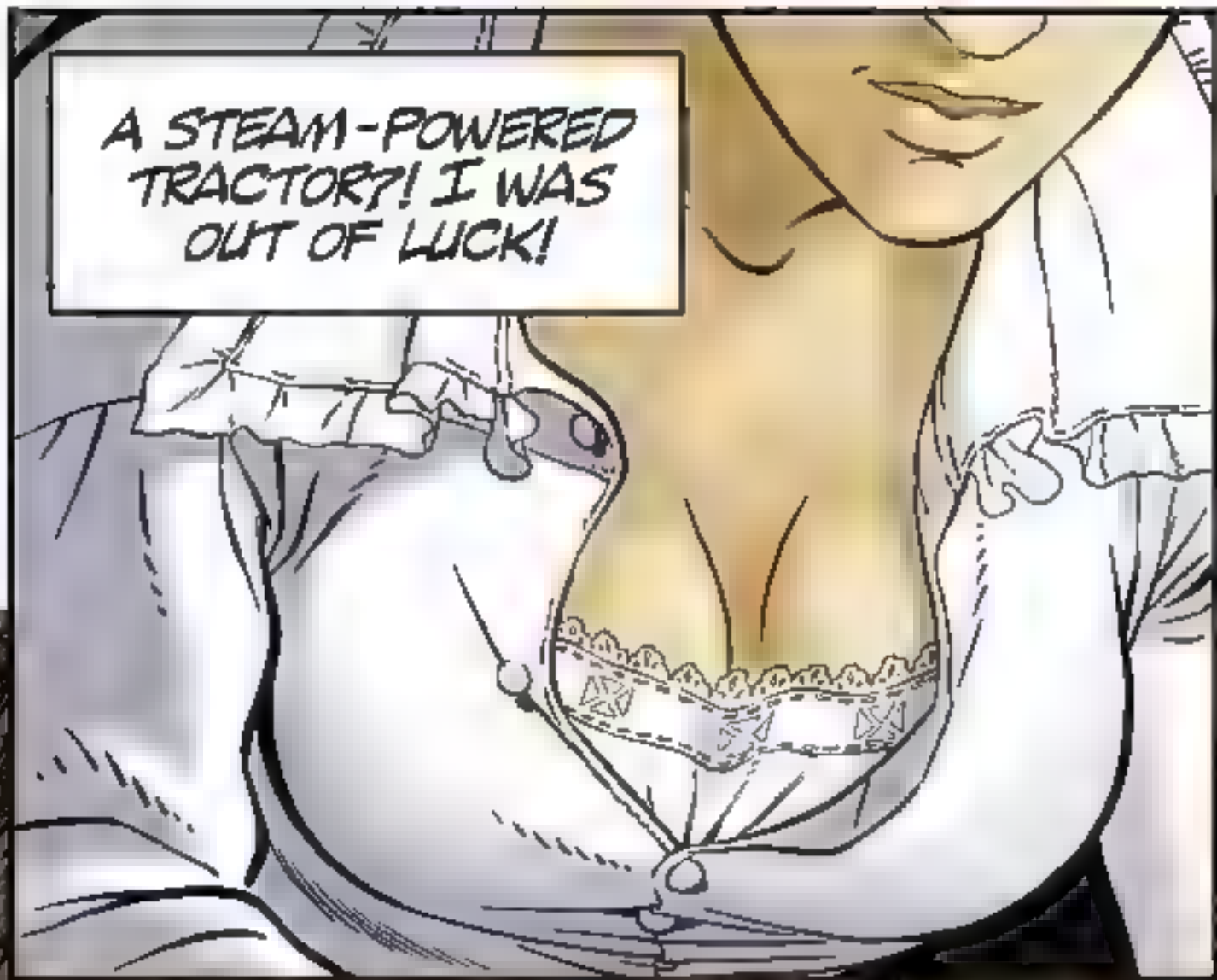
"LET YOUR MODERATION BE KNOWN UNTO ALL MEN." BY WHICH HE MEANT ALSO THE WAY WE DRESS AND STYLE OUR HAIR.



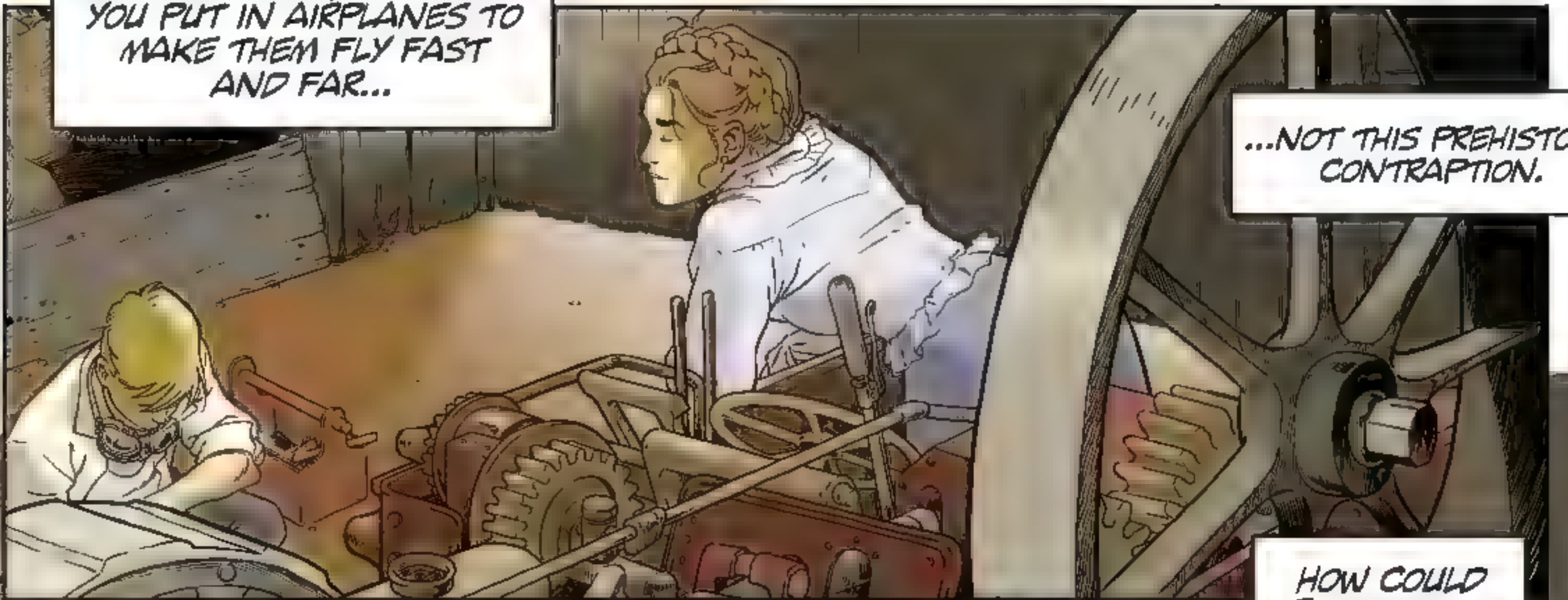
DON'T YOU SEE THAT YOUR WIFE'S TRYING TO SEDUCE OTHER MEN? SHE'S STILL YOUNG, AND HER BODY IS CRYING OUT TO PROCREATE!

WHY DO YOU STILL HAVE NO CHILDREN, KLAUS?

ARE YOU EXERCISING YOUR CONJUGAL RIGHTS?



A STEAM-POWERED TRACTOR? I WAS OUT OF LUCK!

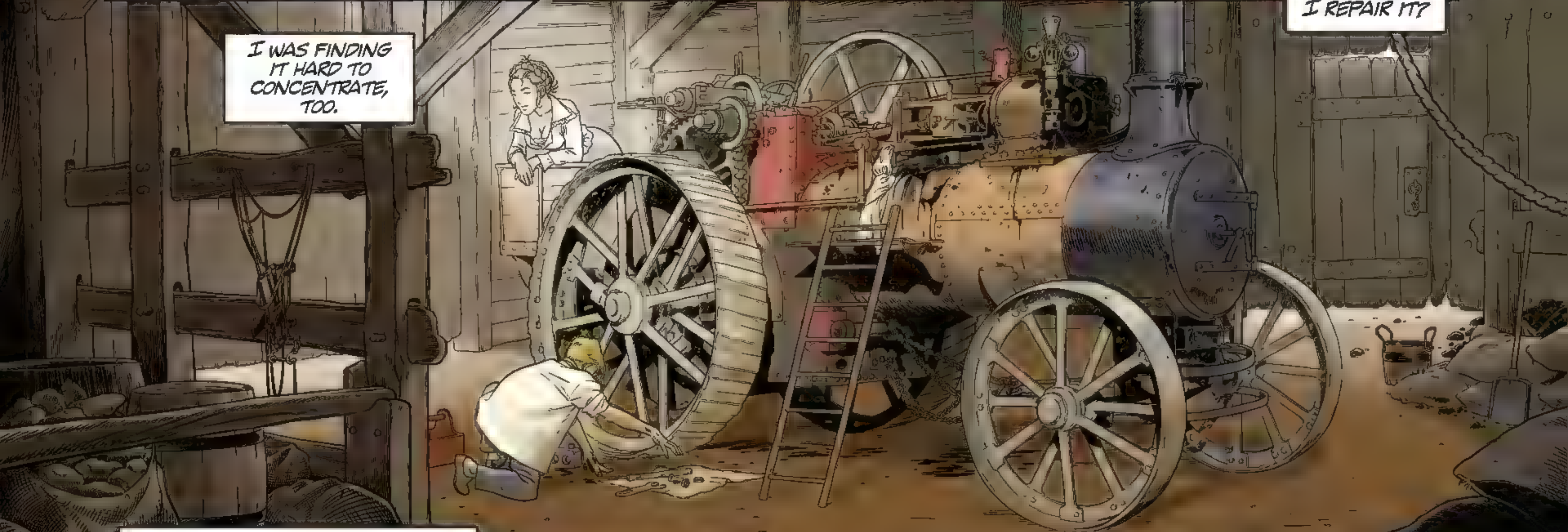


I LOVED MESSING AROUND WITH ENGINES-- BUT GAS ONES, THE ONES YOU PUT IN AIRPLANES TO MAKE THEM FLY FAST AND FAR...

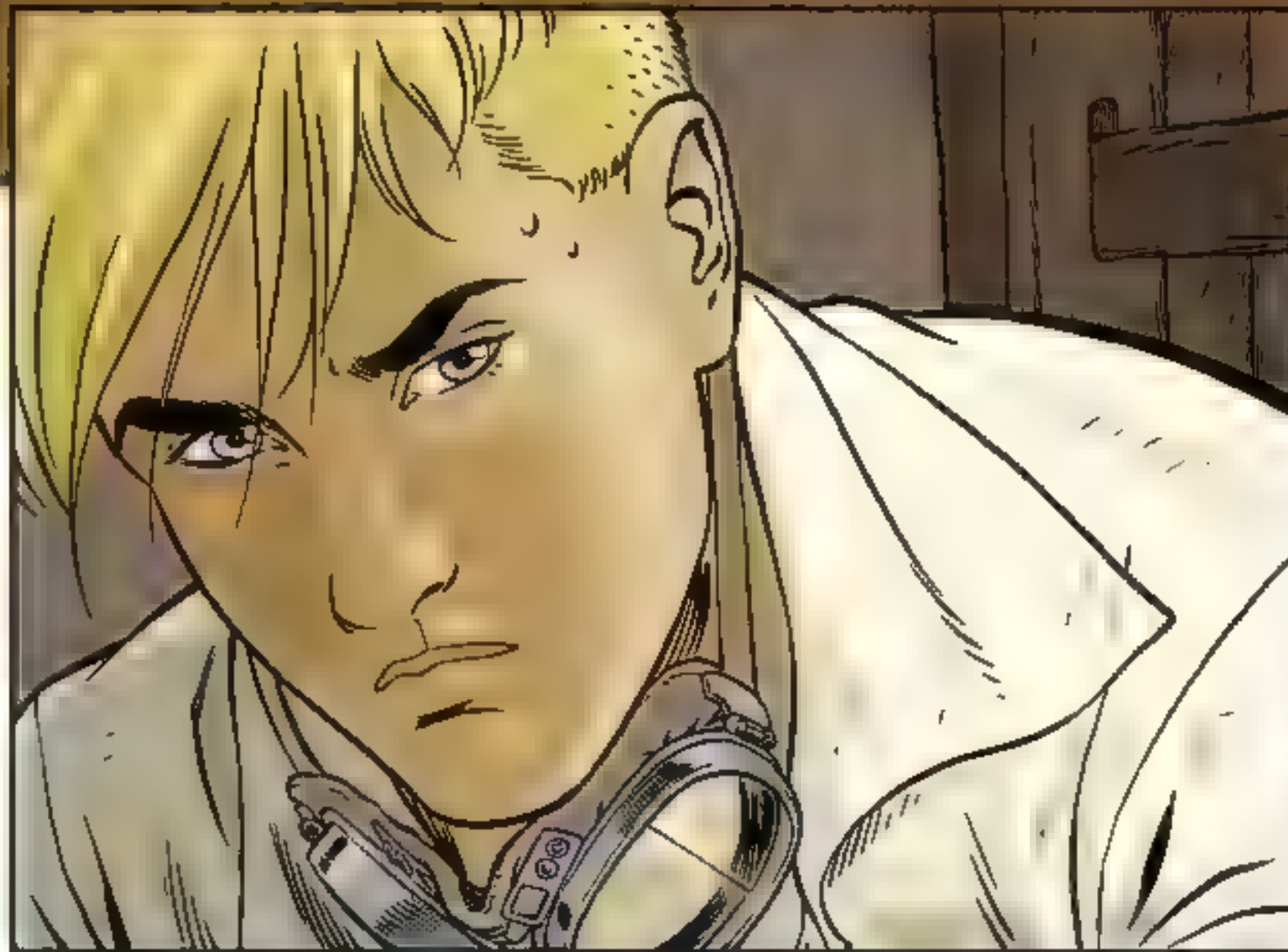
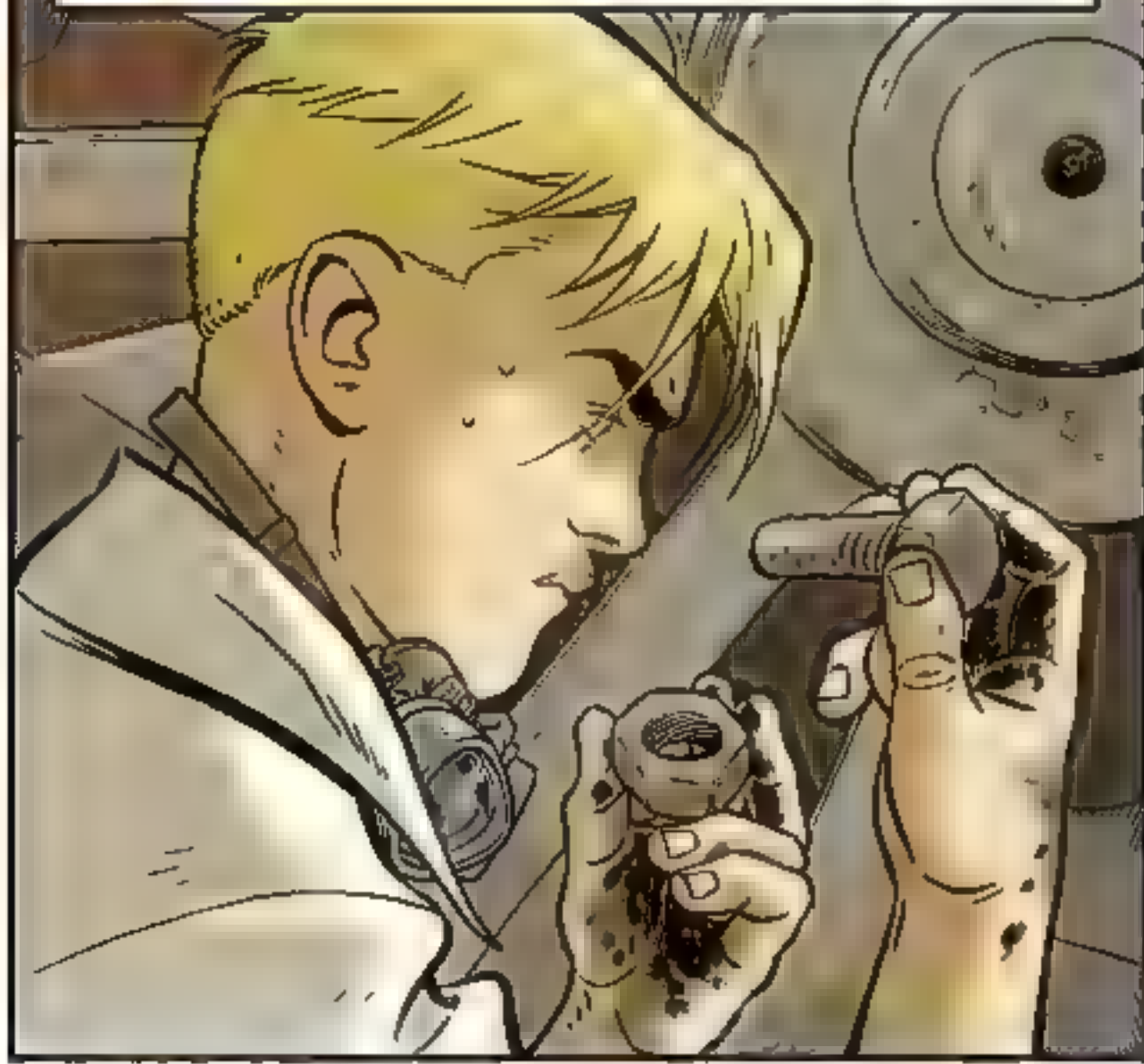
...NOT THIS PREHISTORIC CONTRAPTION.

I WAS FINDING IT HARD TO CONCENTRATE, TOO.

HOW COULD I REPAIR IT?



HAVING SILKE... I MEAN, MRS. BECKER STANDING OVER ME WAS UNSETTLING... IN A WAY I'D NEVER FELT BEFORE.

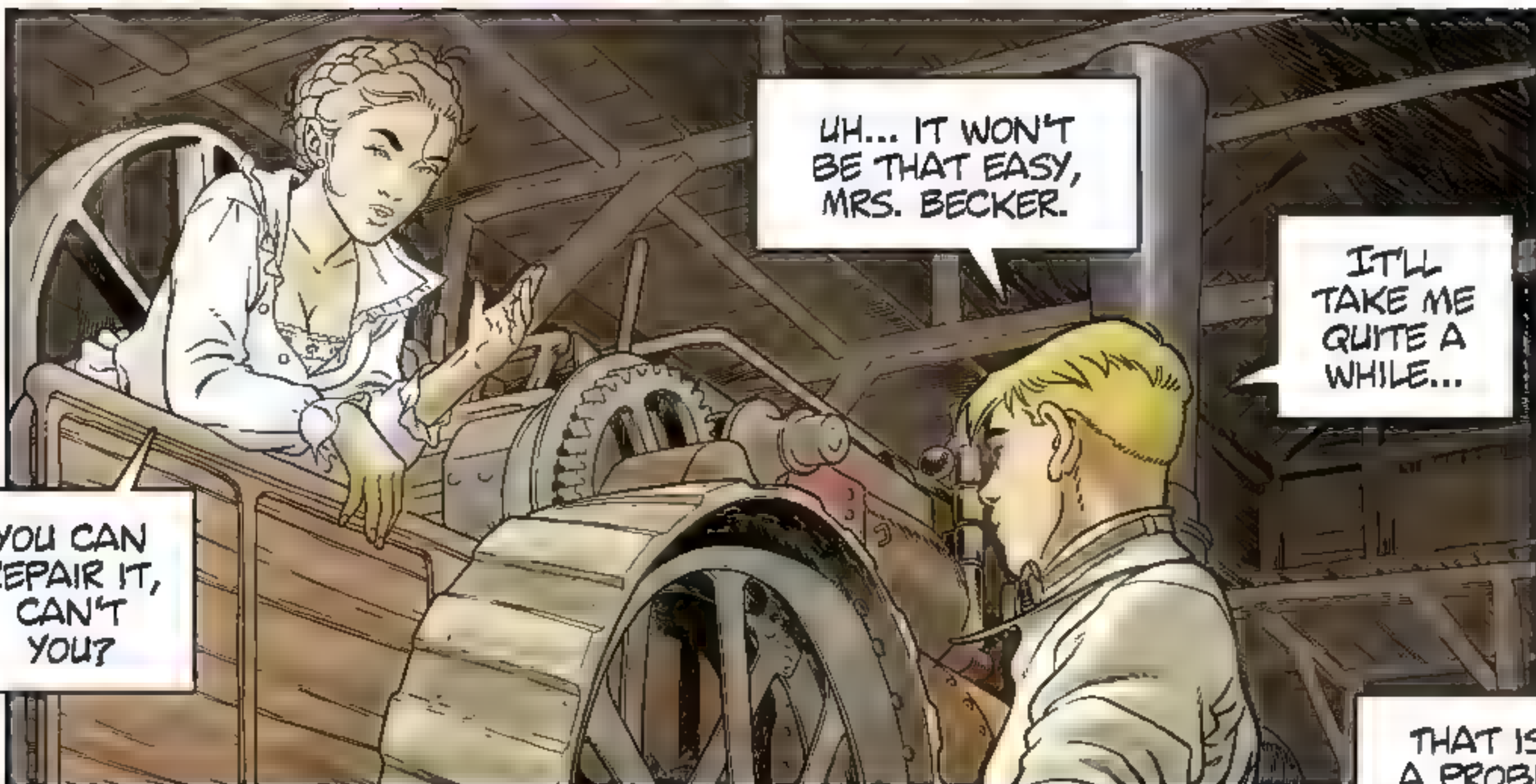


THE ONLY GIRLS I'D KNOWN UP TILL THEN WERE MY OWN SISTERS AND THE SCHNABELS' DAUGHTER, WHO ALWAYS SAT STARING AT ME DURING MASS.



WELL?

BUT THE WAY THIS WOMAN WAS LOOKING AT ME AND MOVING HER BODY MADE ME REALIZE THAT, FROM NOW ON, NO GIRL STARING AT ME IN CHURCH WOULD EVER BE ABLE TO SATISFY THE LONGING THAT WOULD SO OFTEN WAKE ME IN THE NIGHT.



UH... IT WON'T BE THAT EASY, MRS. BECKER.

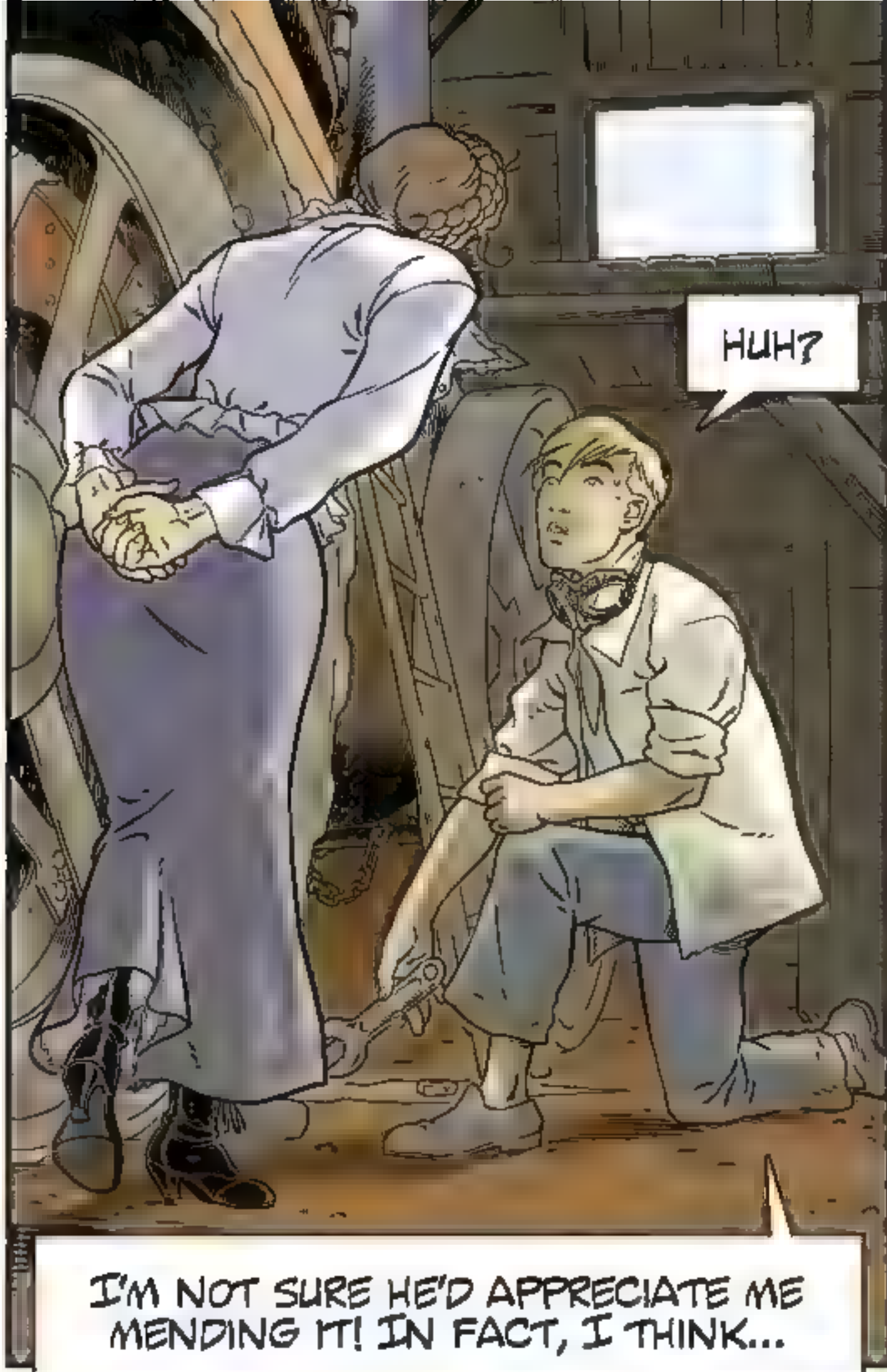
IT'LL TAKE ME QUITE A WHILE...

YOU CAN REPAIR IT, CAN'T YOU?

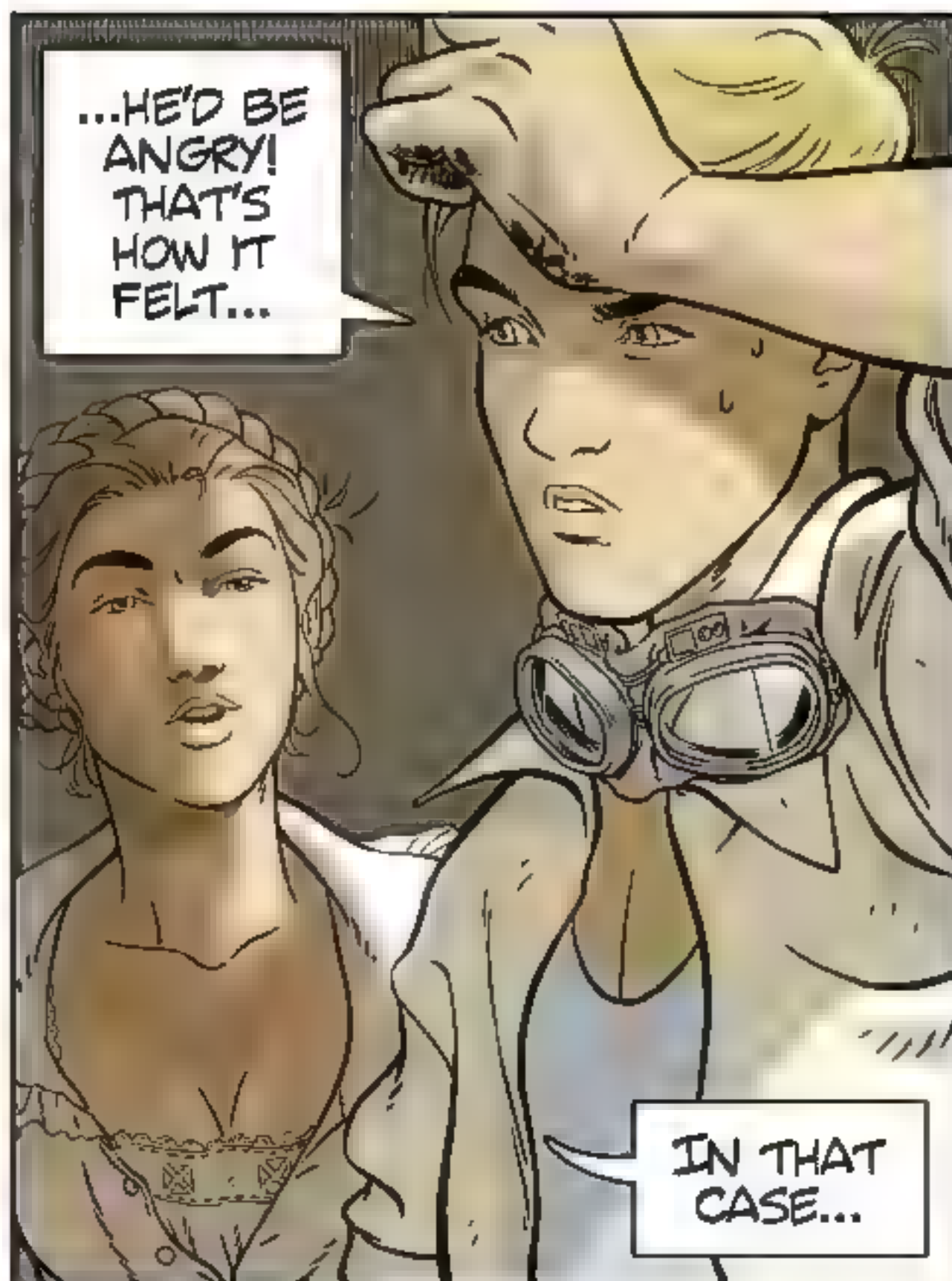
THAT ISN'T A PROBLEM. YOU CAN STAY FOR A FEW DAYS.



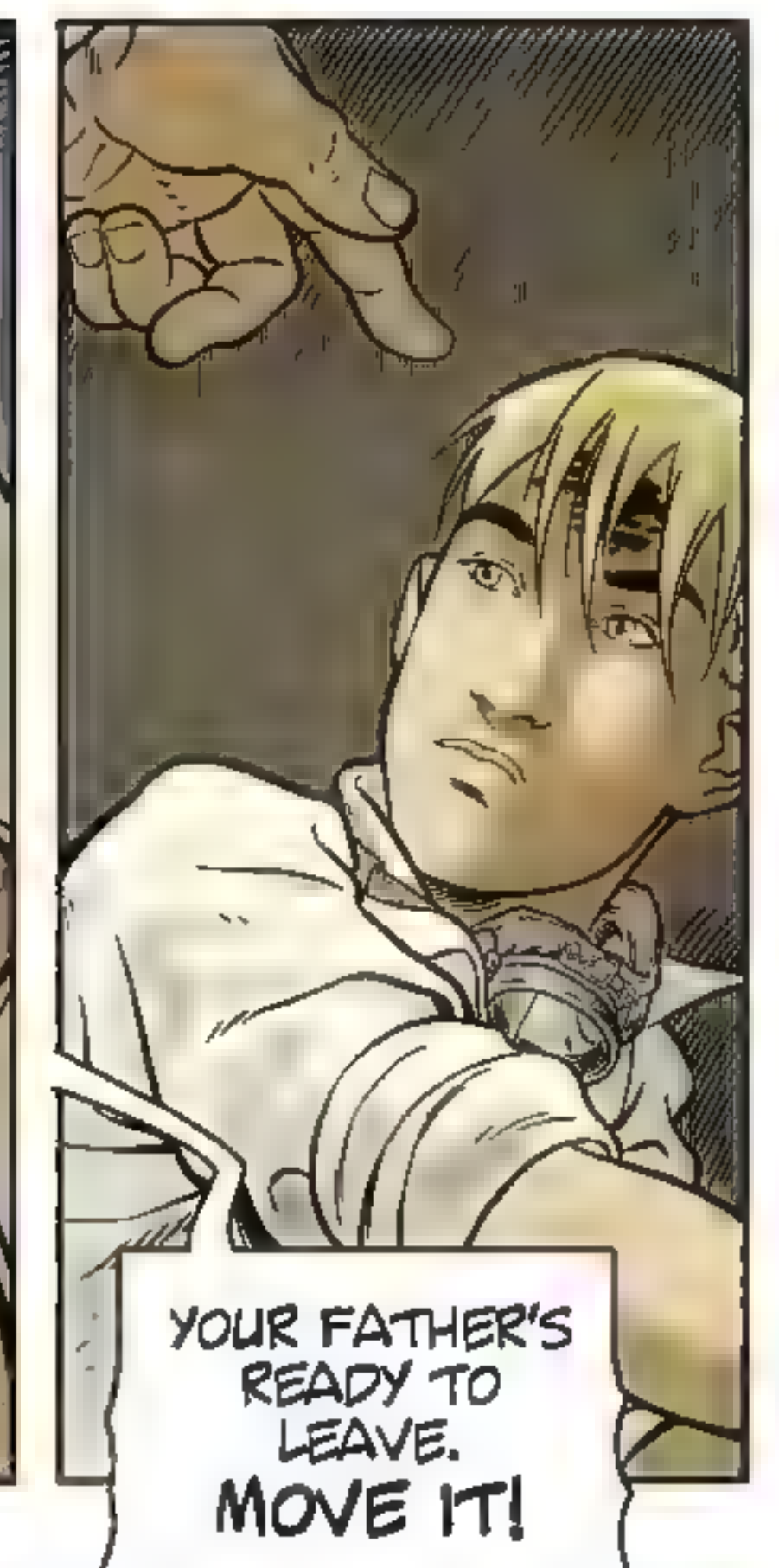
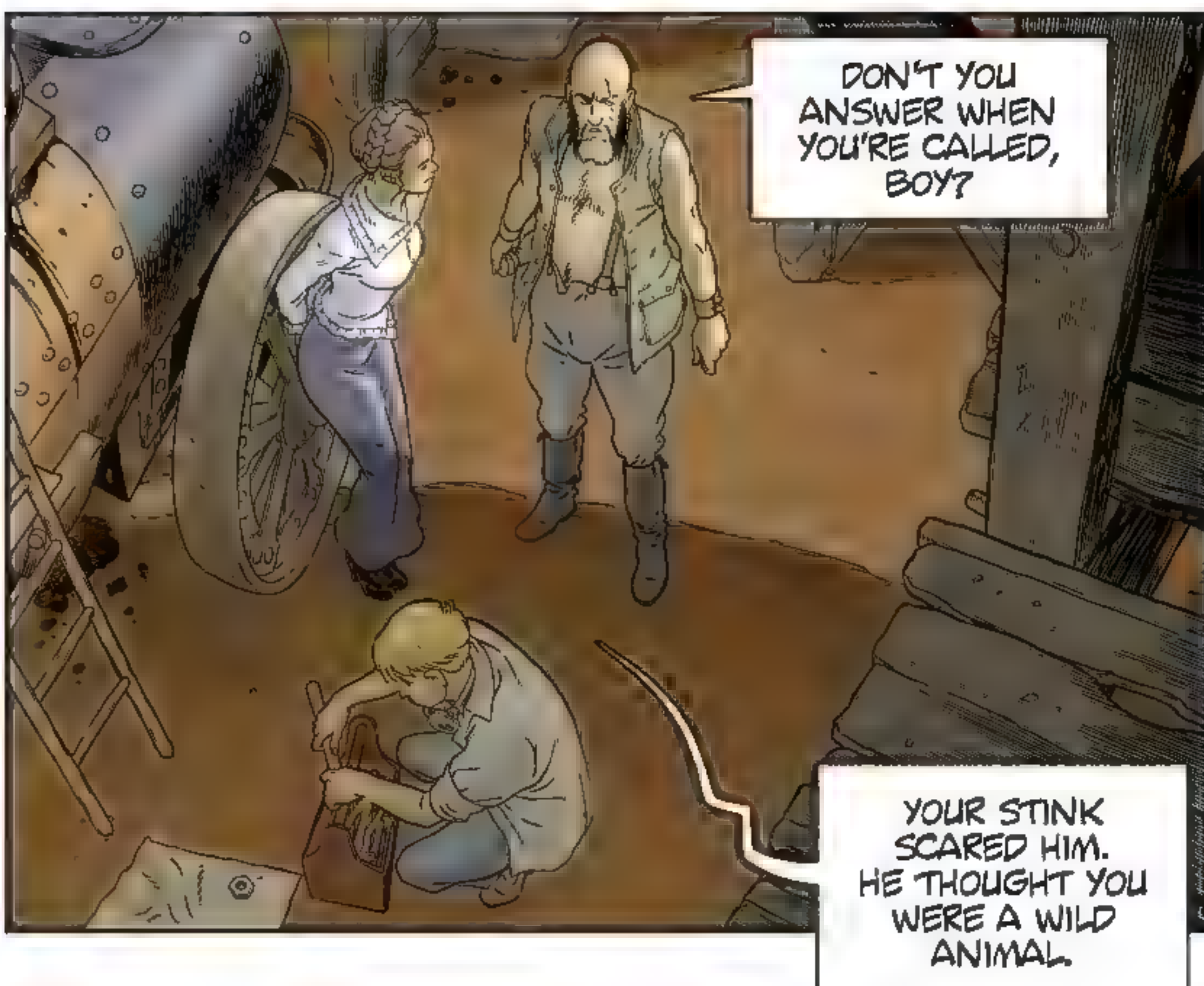
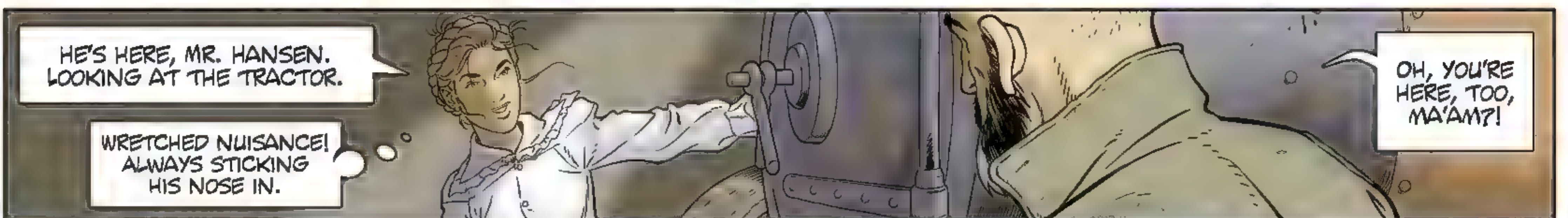
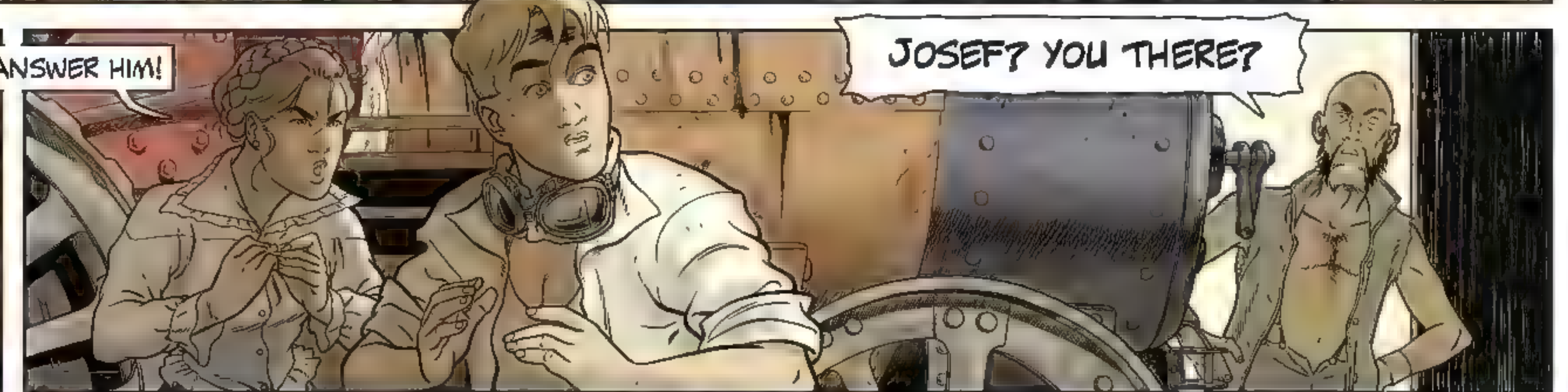
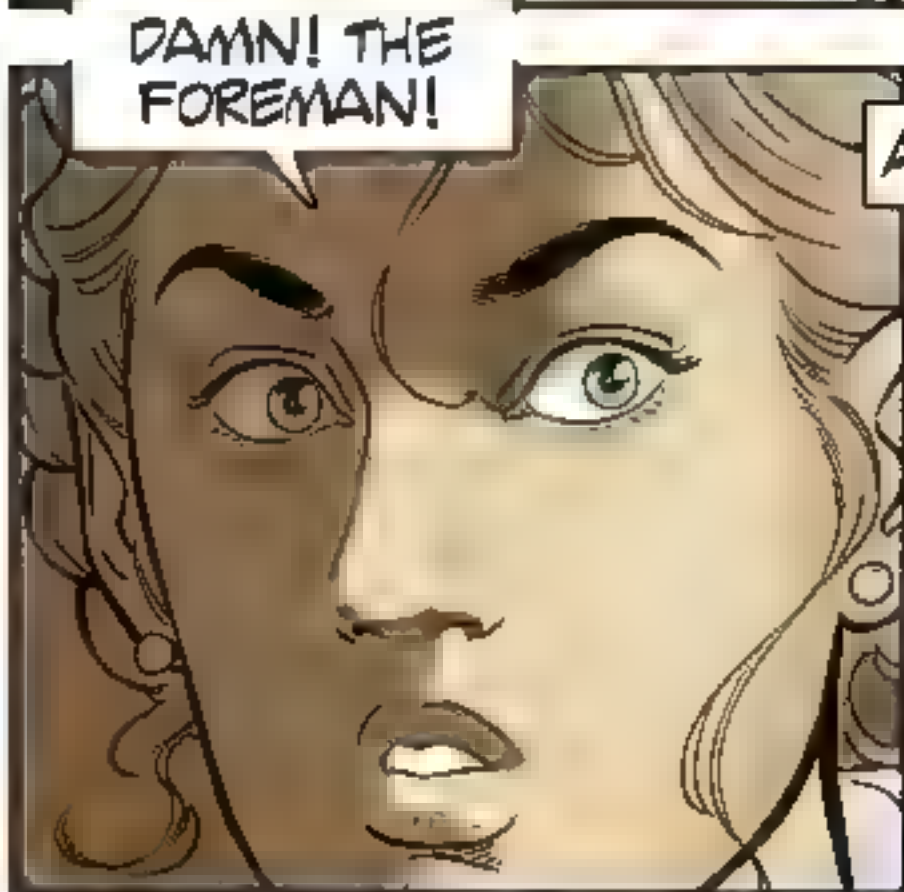
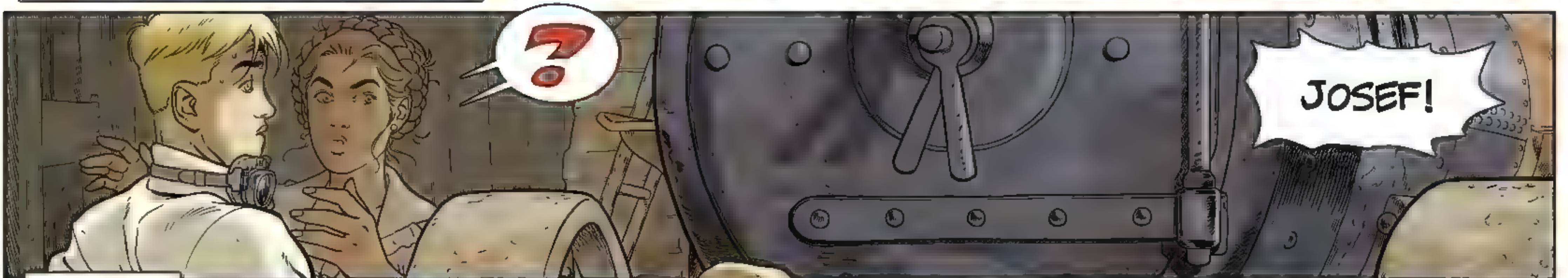
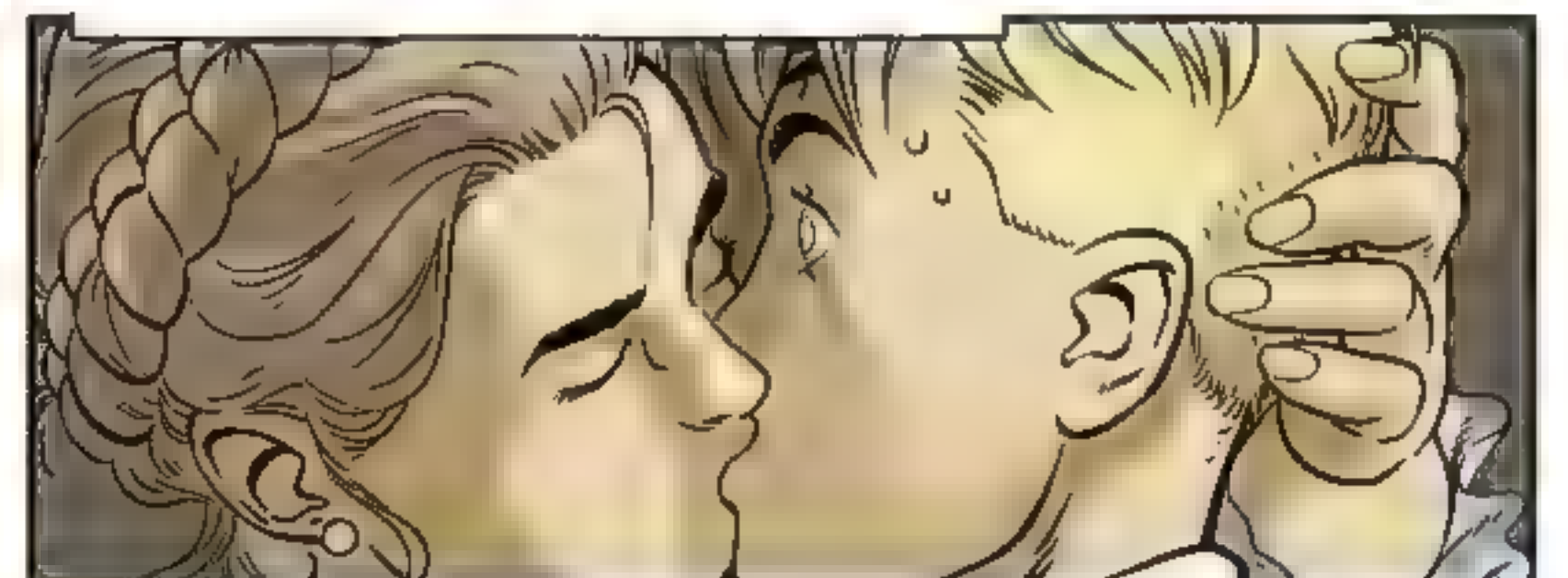
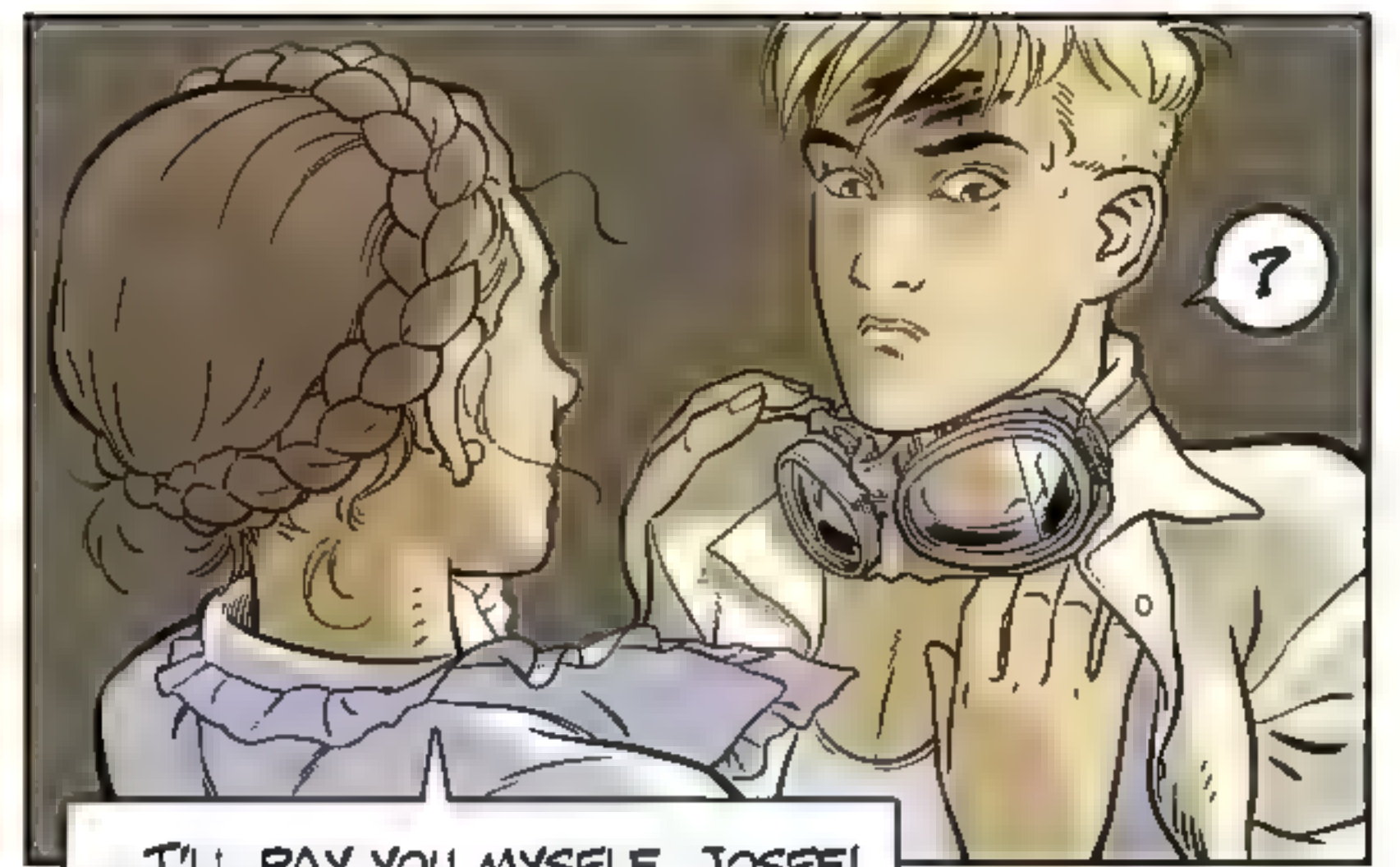
IF YOU MEND IT, MY HUSBAND WILL PAY YOU.



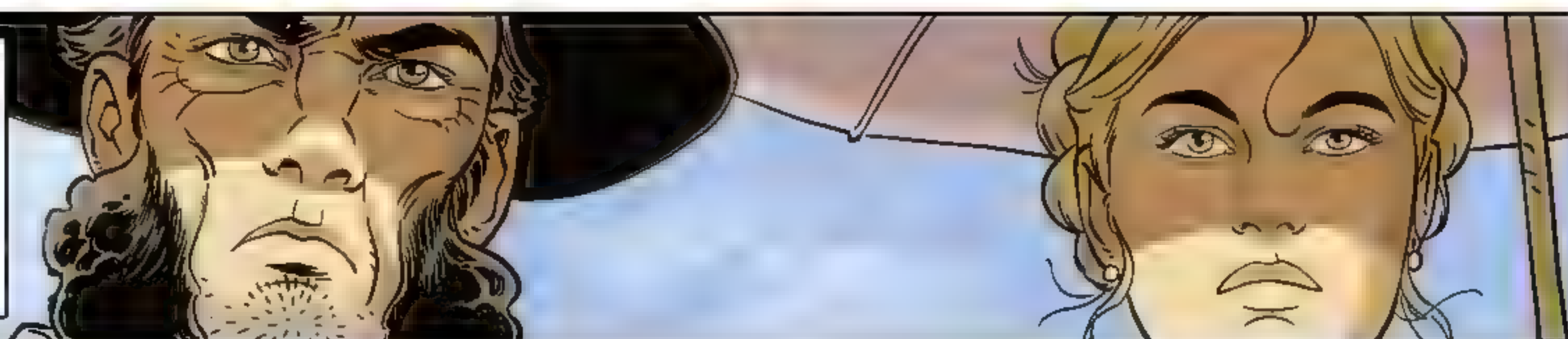
I'M NOT SURE HE'D APPRECIATE ME MENDING IT! IN FACT, I THINK...



IN THAT CASE...

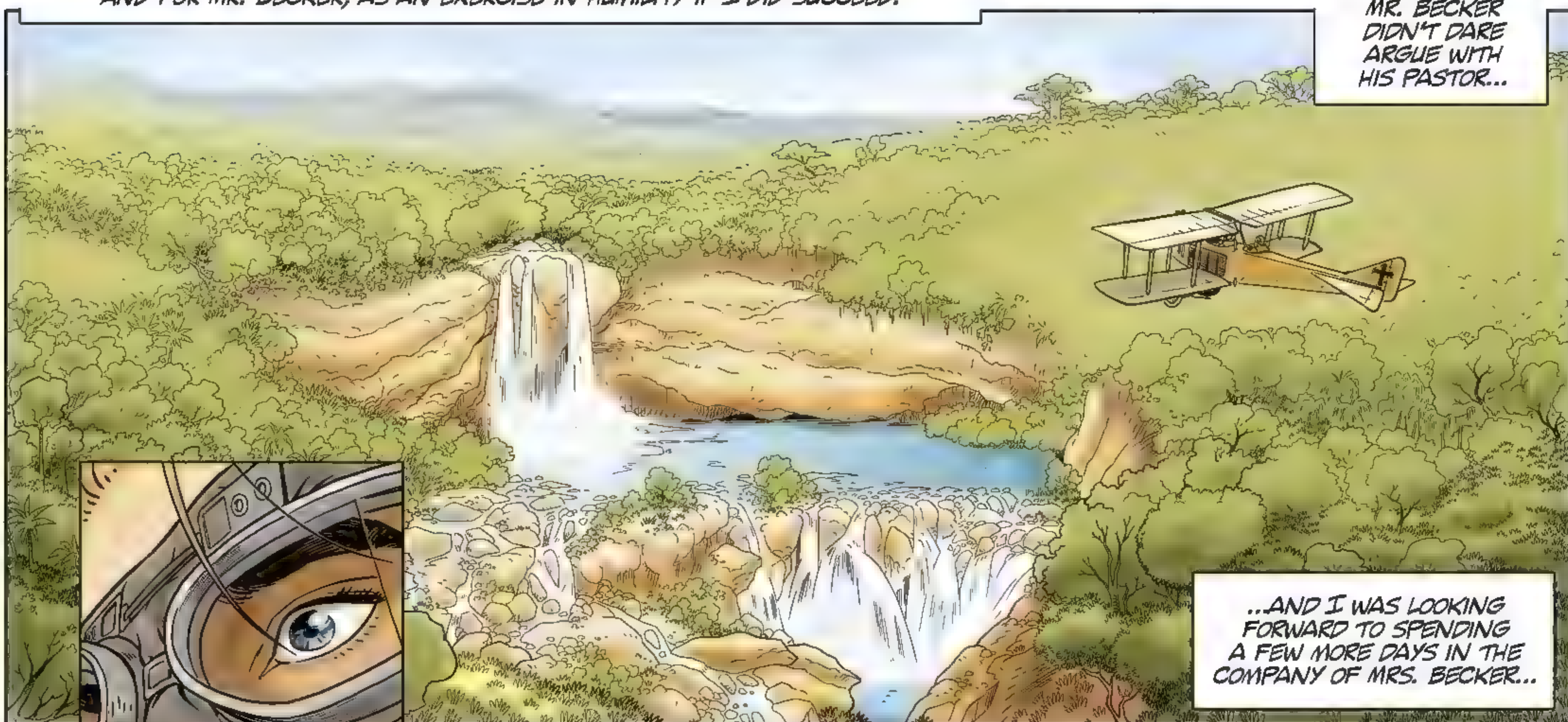


AT MRS. BECKER'S INSISTENCE, AND TO MY GREAT SURPRISE, MY FATHER AGREED TO MY COMING BACK ANOTHER TIME TO TRY TO REPAIR THE OLD TRACTOR. HE SAW THIS AS HAVING TWO POSSIBLE BENEFITS.

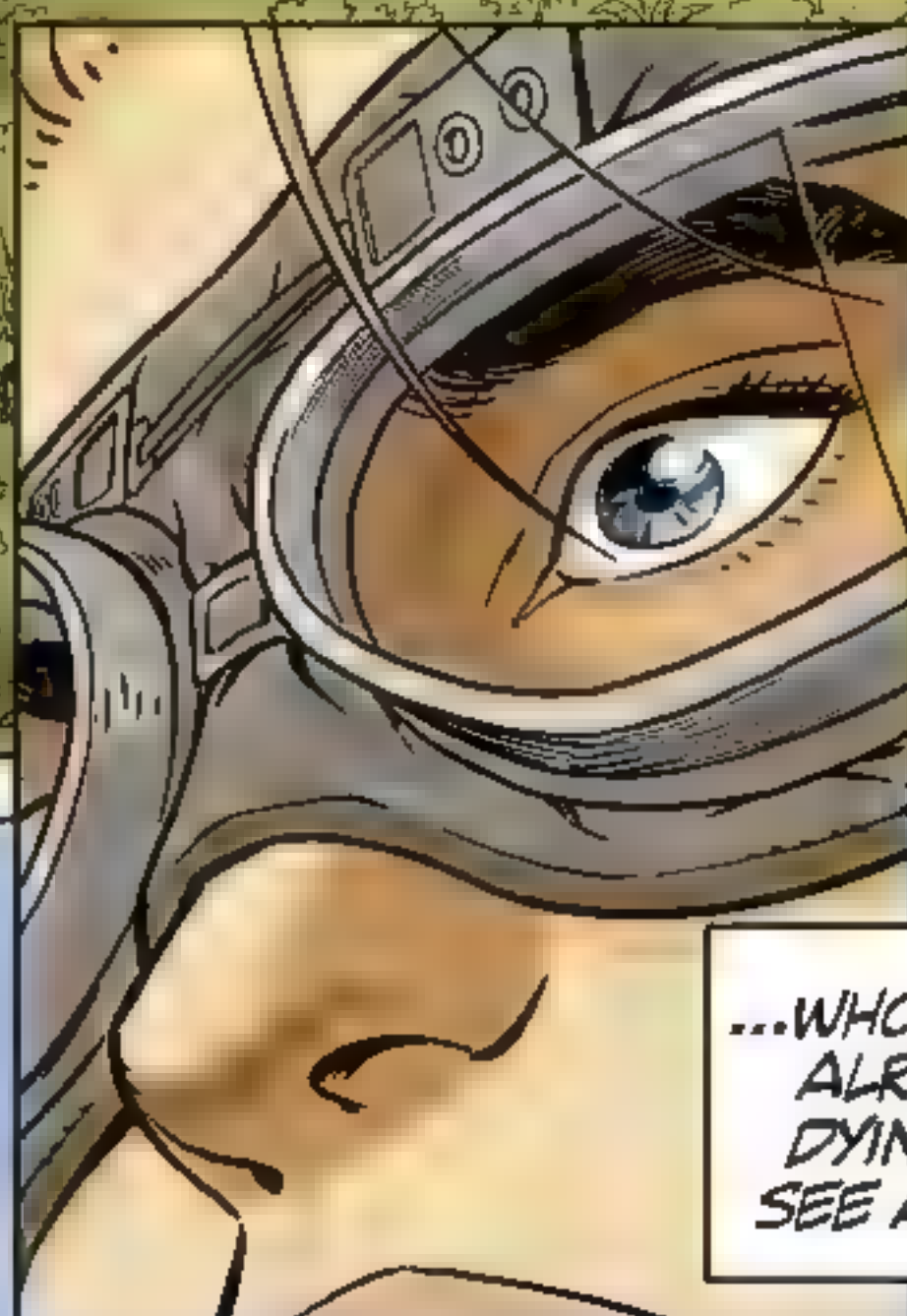


FOR ME, AS A USEFUL TEST OF MY RESOURCEFULNESS AND DETERMINATION. AND FOR MR. BECKER, AS AN EXERCISE IN HUMILITY IF I DID SUCCEED.

MR. BECKER DIDN'T DARE ARGUE WITH HIS PASTOR...

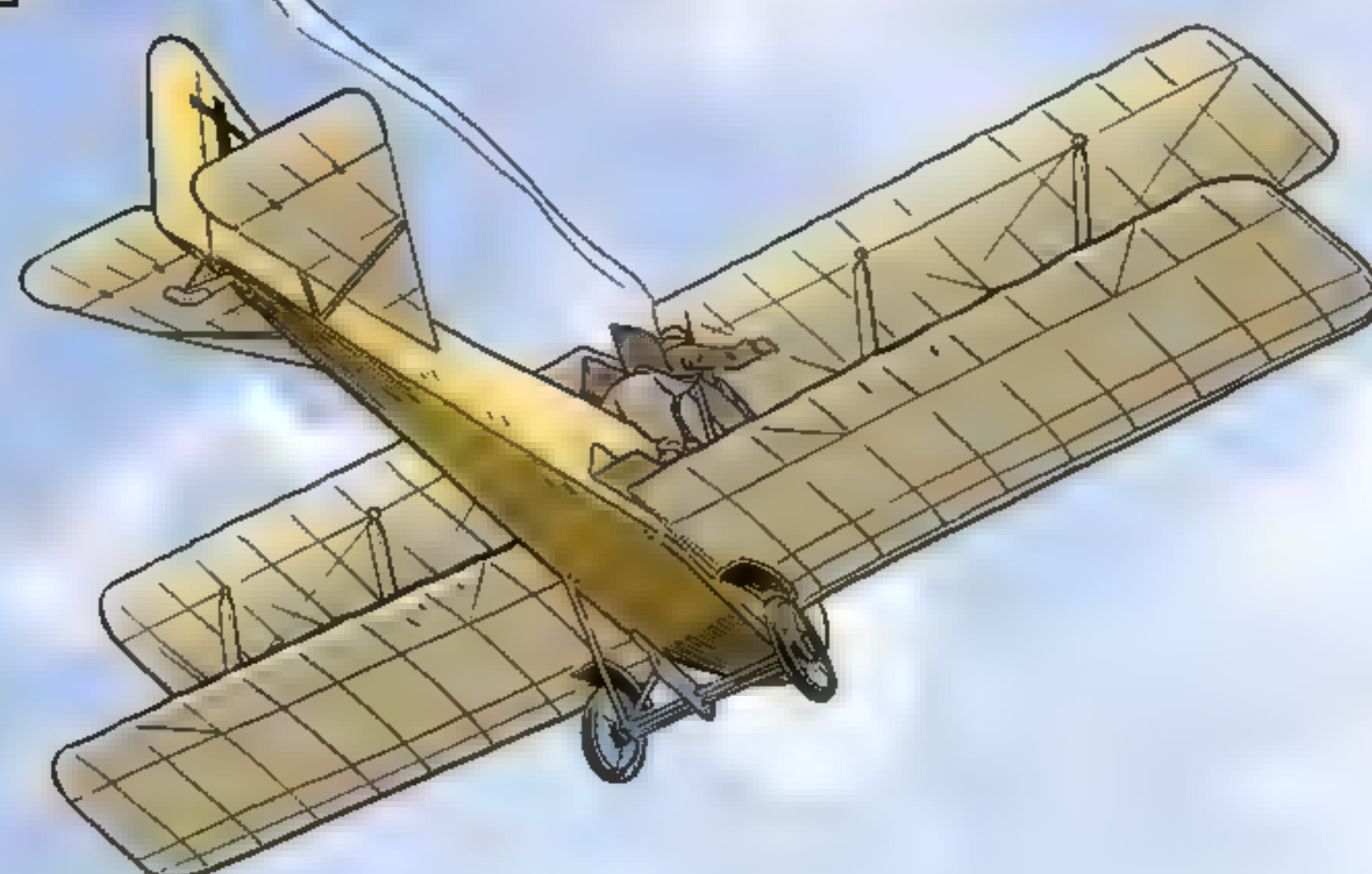


...AND I WAS LOOKING FORWARD TO SPENDING A FEW MORE DAYS IN THE COMPANY OF MRS. BECKER...



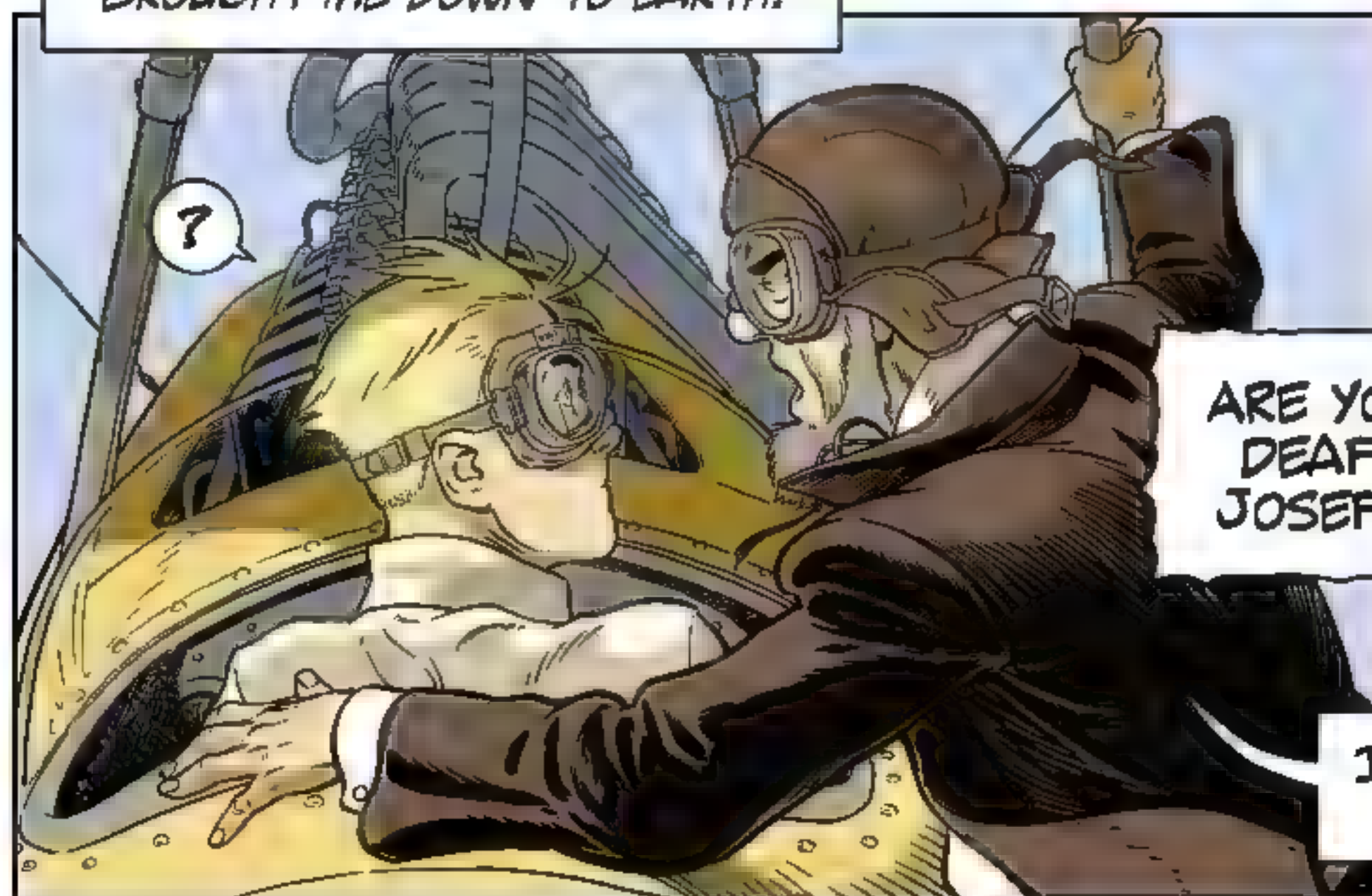
...WHO I WAS ALREADY DYING TO SEE AGAIN!

SILKE... MY FIRST KISS!



TO SAY THAT I WAS "IN THE CLOUDS" WAS MORE TRUE THAN IT HAD EVER BEEN!

BUT MY FATHER'S VOICE SOON BROUGHT ME DOWN TO EARTH.



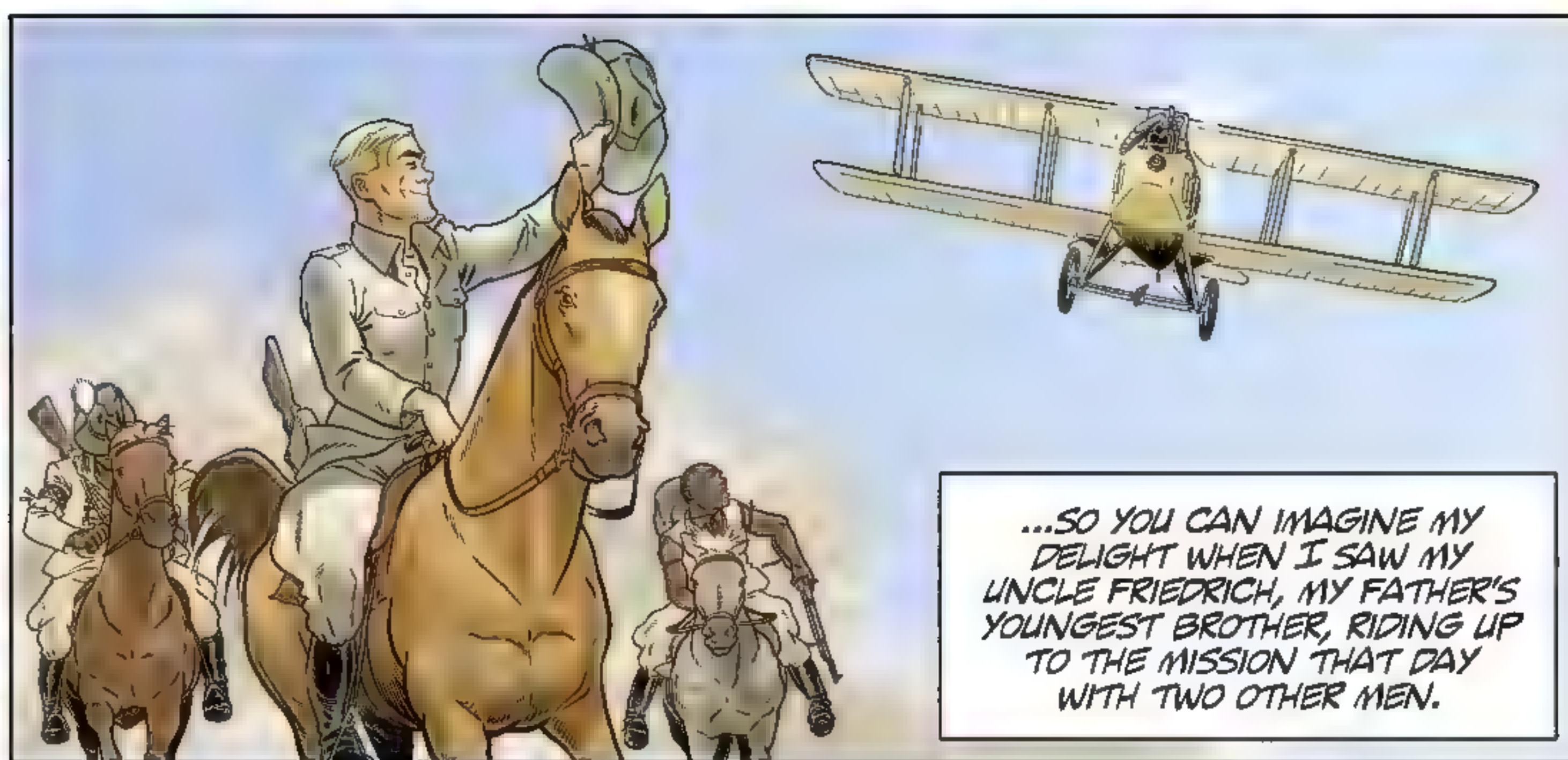
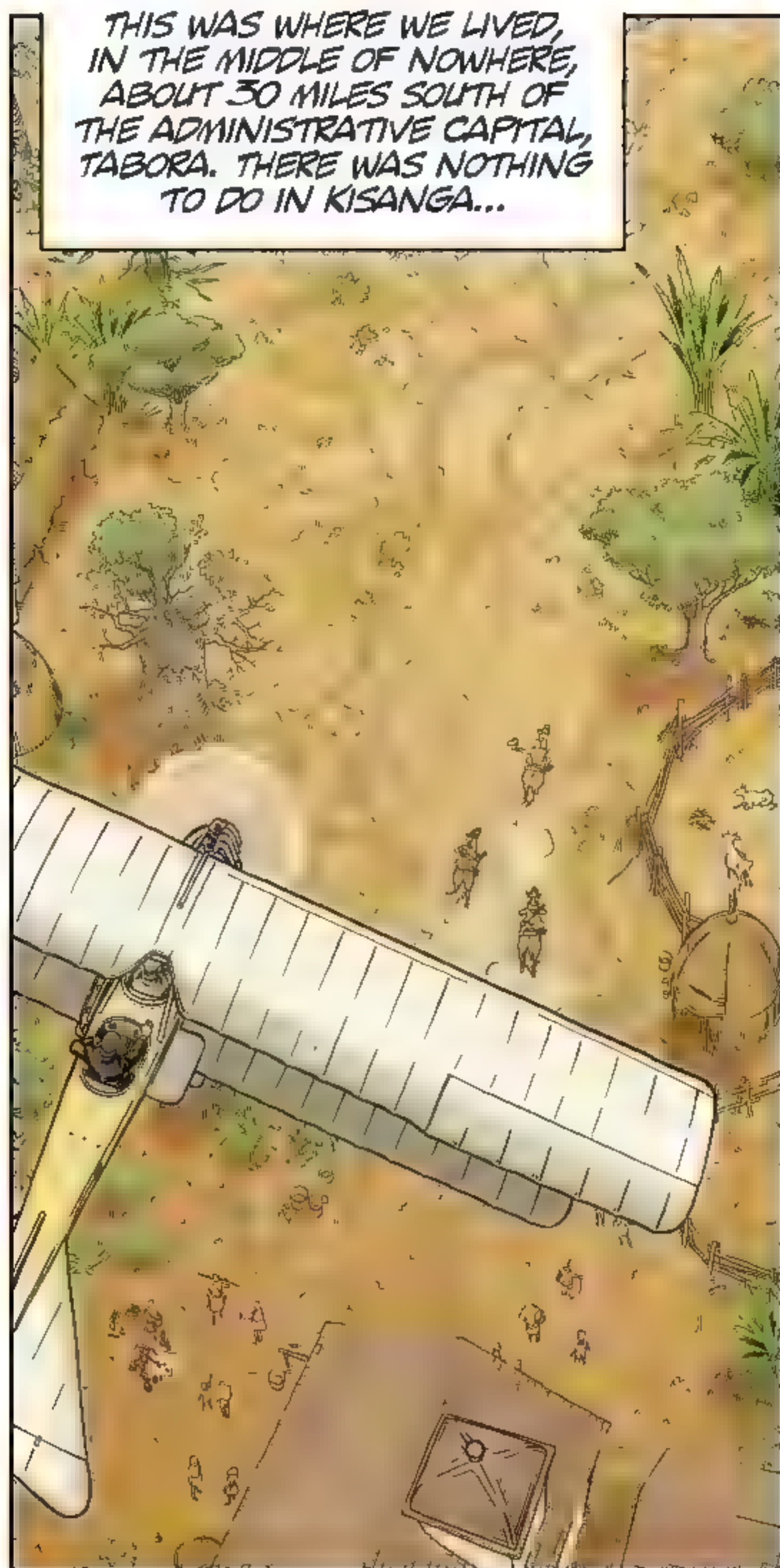
ARE YOU DEAF, JOSEF?

I'VE BEEN YELLING FOR FIVE MINUTES! YOU'VE PASSED THE MISSION!

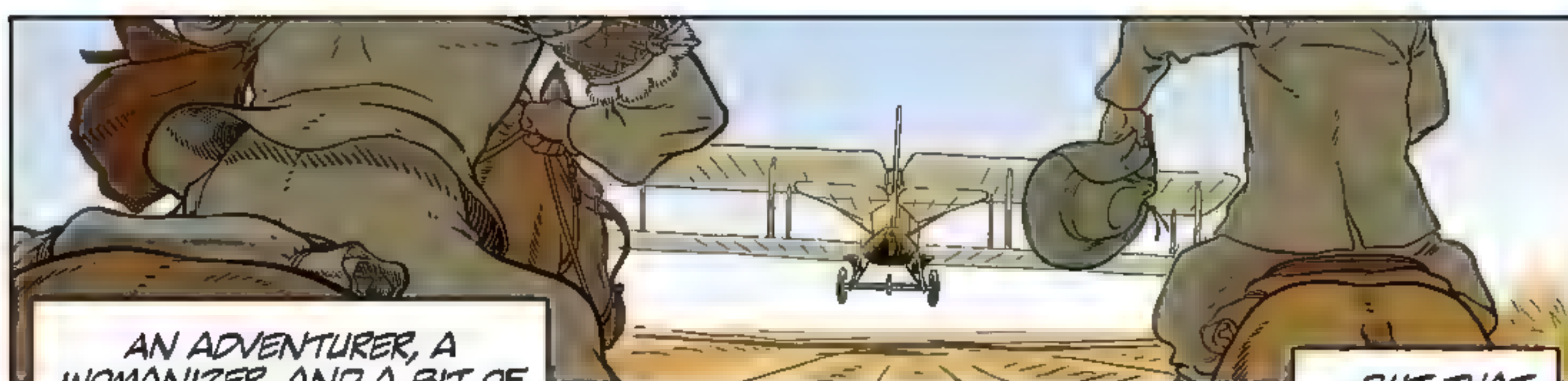
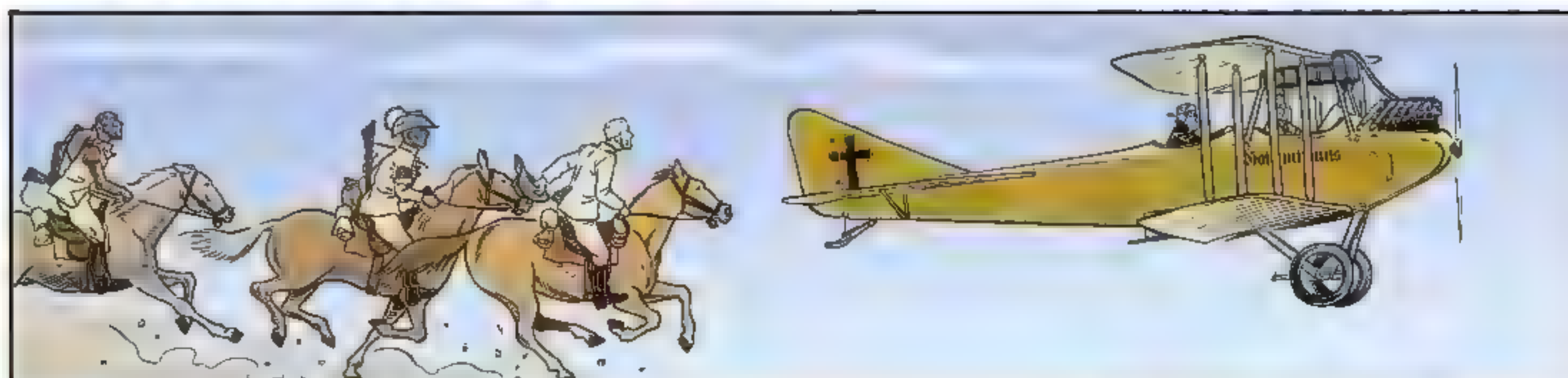


KISANGA WAS ORIGINALLY A SUKUMA VILLAGE. ITS PEOPLE WERE HERDSMEN AND FARMERS. MY FATHER BUILT A PROTESTANT CHURCH THERE, ALONG WITH A SCHOOL AND A DISPENSARY, WHICH MEANT THAT COLONIAL FAMILIES STARTED SETTLING THERE, TOO.

THIS WAS WHERE WE LIVED, IN THE MIDDLE OF NOWHERE, ABOUT 30 MILES SOUTH OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE CAPITAL, TABORA. THERE WAS NOTHING TO DO IN KISANGA...



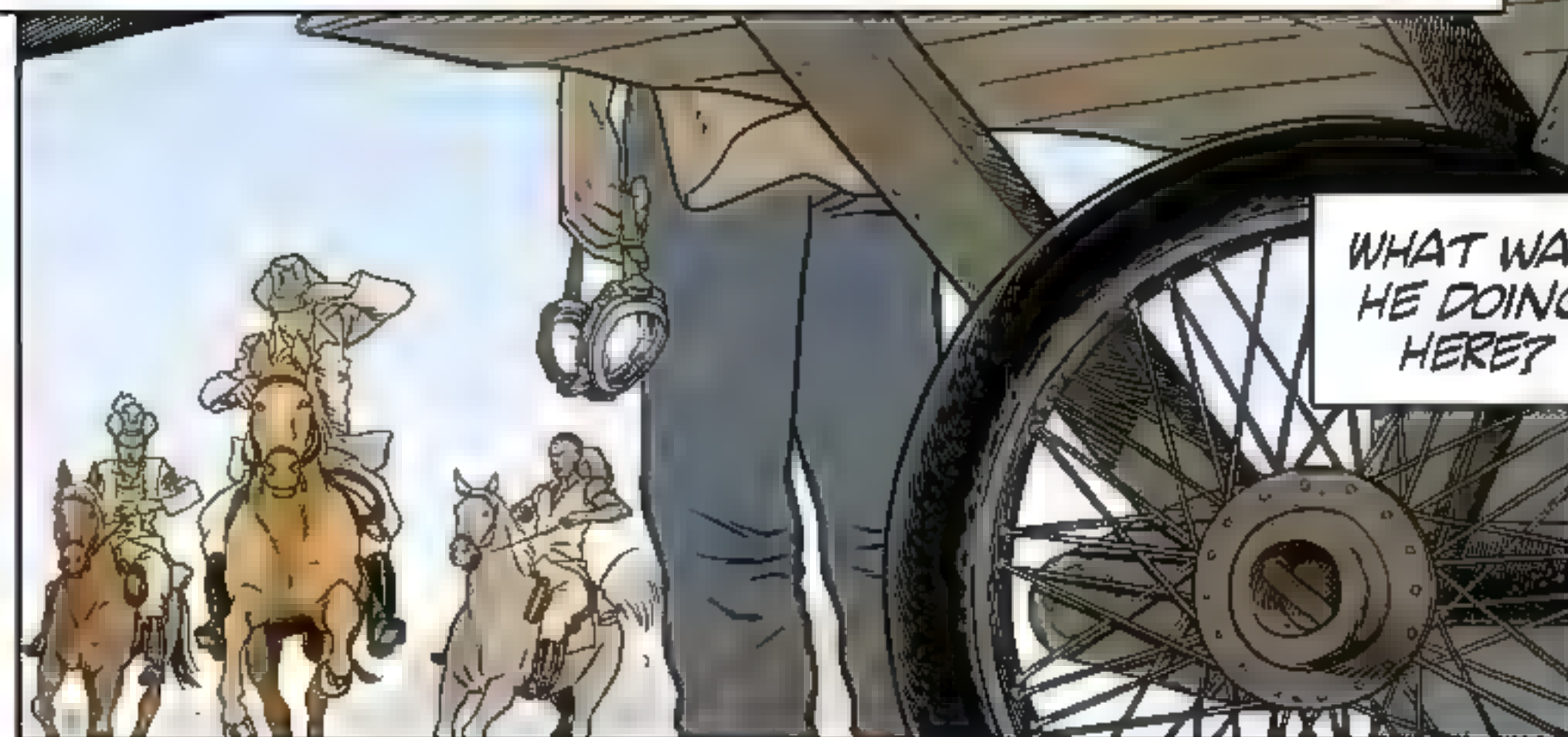
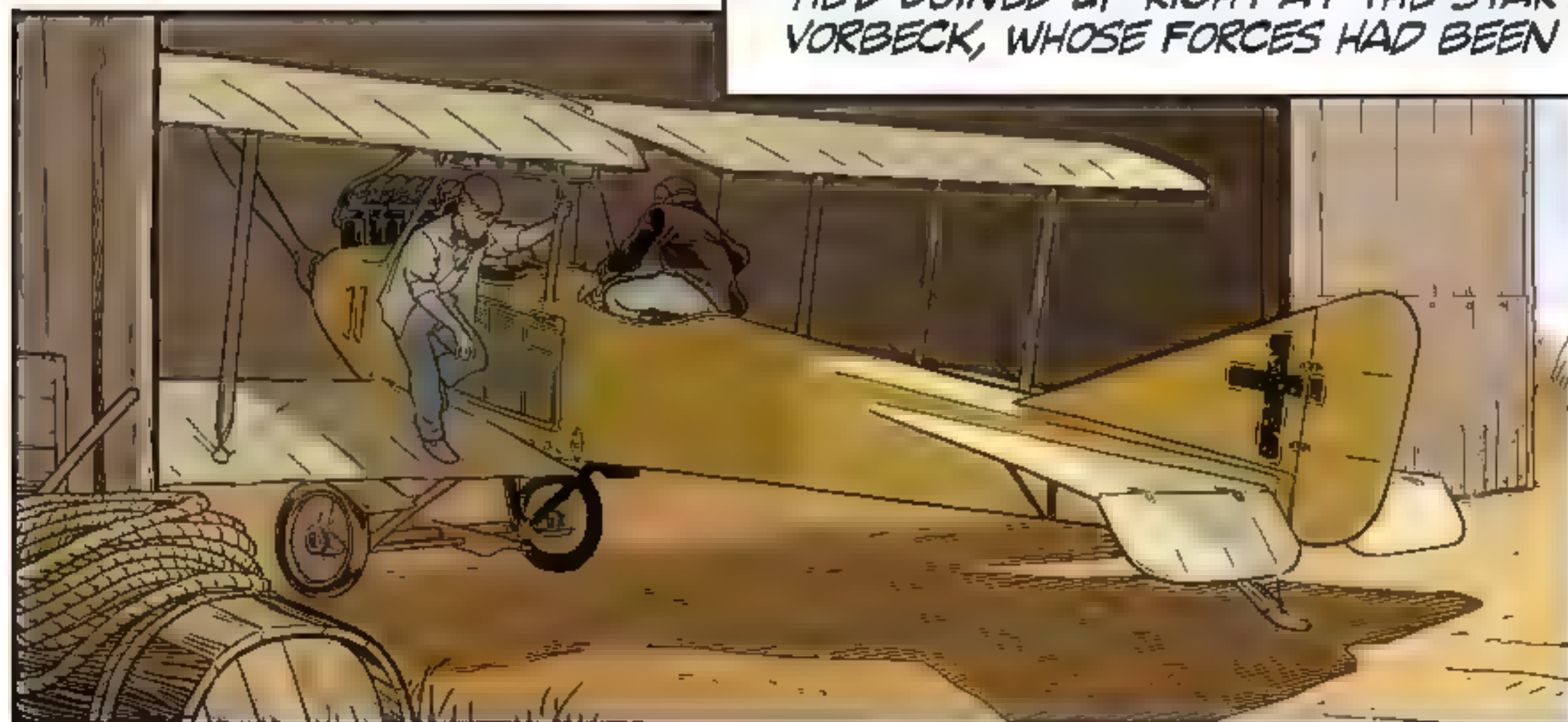
...SO YOU CAN IMAGINE MY DELIGHT WHEN I SAW MY UNCLE FRIEDRICH, MY FATHER'S YOUNGEST BROTHER, RIDING UP TO THE MISSION THAT DAY WITH TWO OTHER MEN.



AN ADVENTURER, A WOMANIZER, AND A BIT OF A BOASTER, HE WAS EVERYTHING MY FATHER HATED...

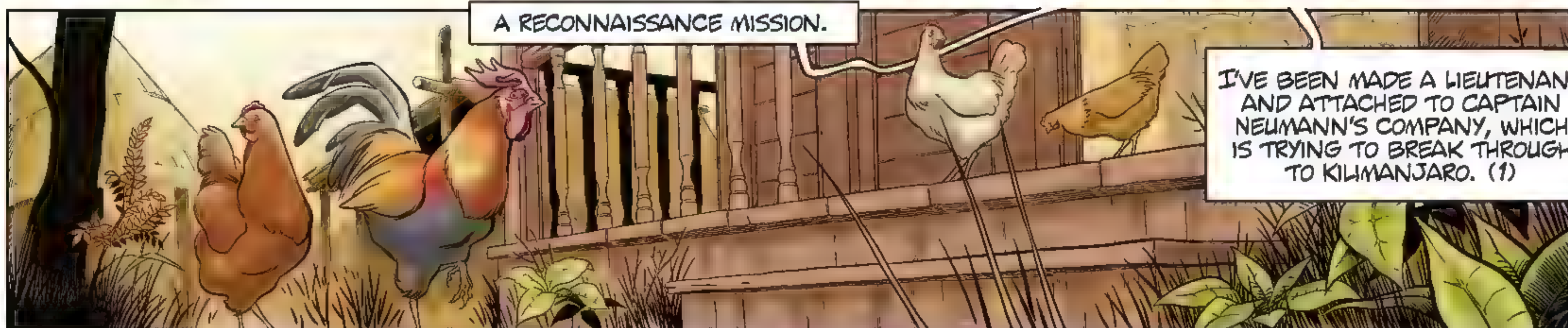
...BUT THAT I FOUND EXCITING!

HE'D JOINED UP RIGHT AT THE START OF THE WAR, AND SERVED UNDER GENERAL VON LETTOW-VORBECK, WHOSE FORCES HAD BEEN RETREATING FROM THE BELGIANS AND BRITISH SINCE 1916.



WHAT WAS HE DOING HERE?

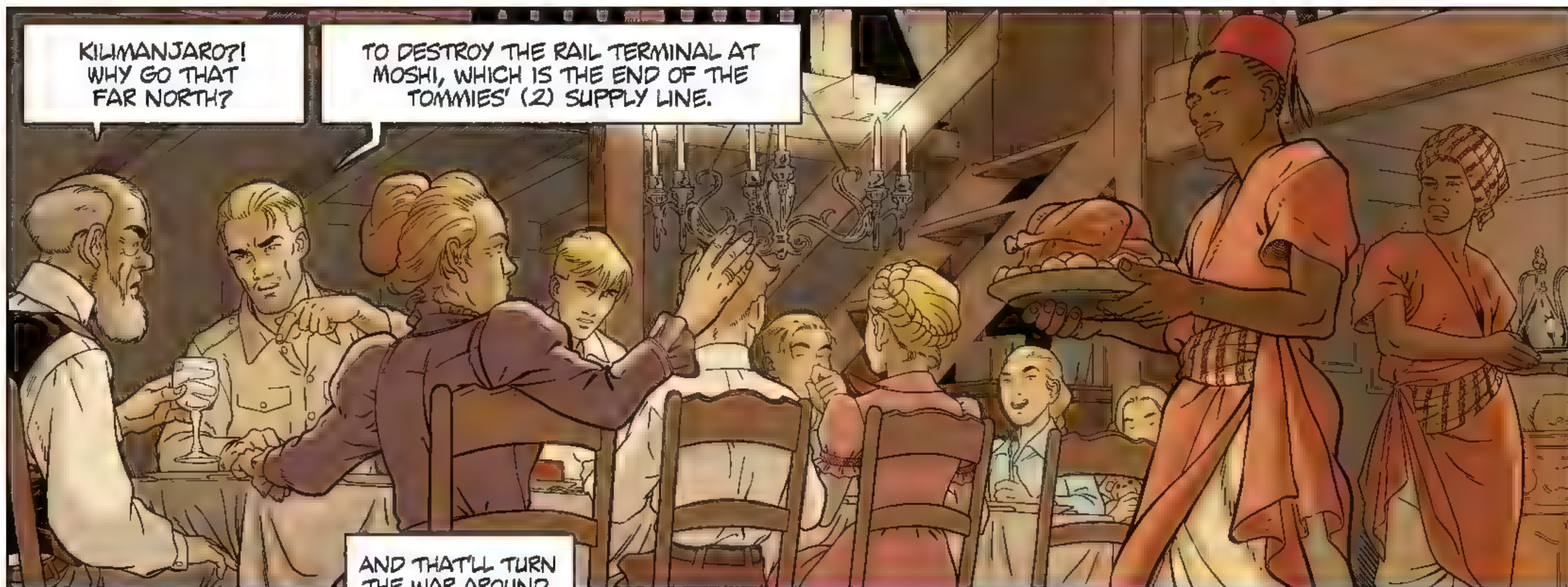
A RECONNAISSANCE MISSION.



I'VE BEEN MADE A LIEUTENANT AND ATTACHED TO CAPTAIN NEUMANN'S COMPANY, WHICH IS TRYING TO BREAK THROUGH TO KILIMANJARO. (1)

KILIMANJARO?! WHY GO THAT FAR NORTH?

TO DESTROY THE RAIL TERMINAL AT MOSHI, WHICH IS THE END OF THE TOMMIES' (2) SUPPLY LINE.



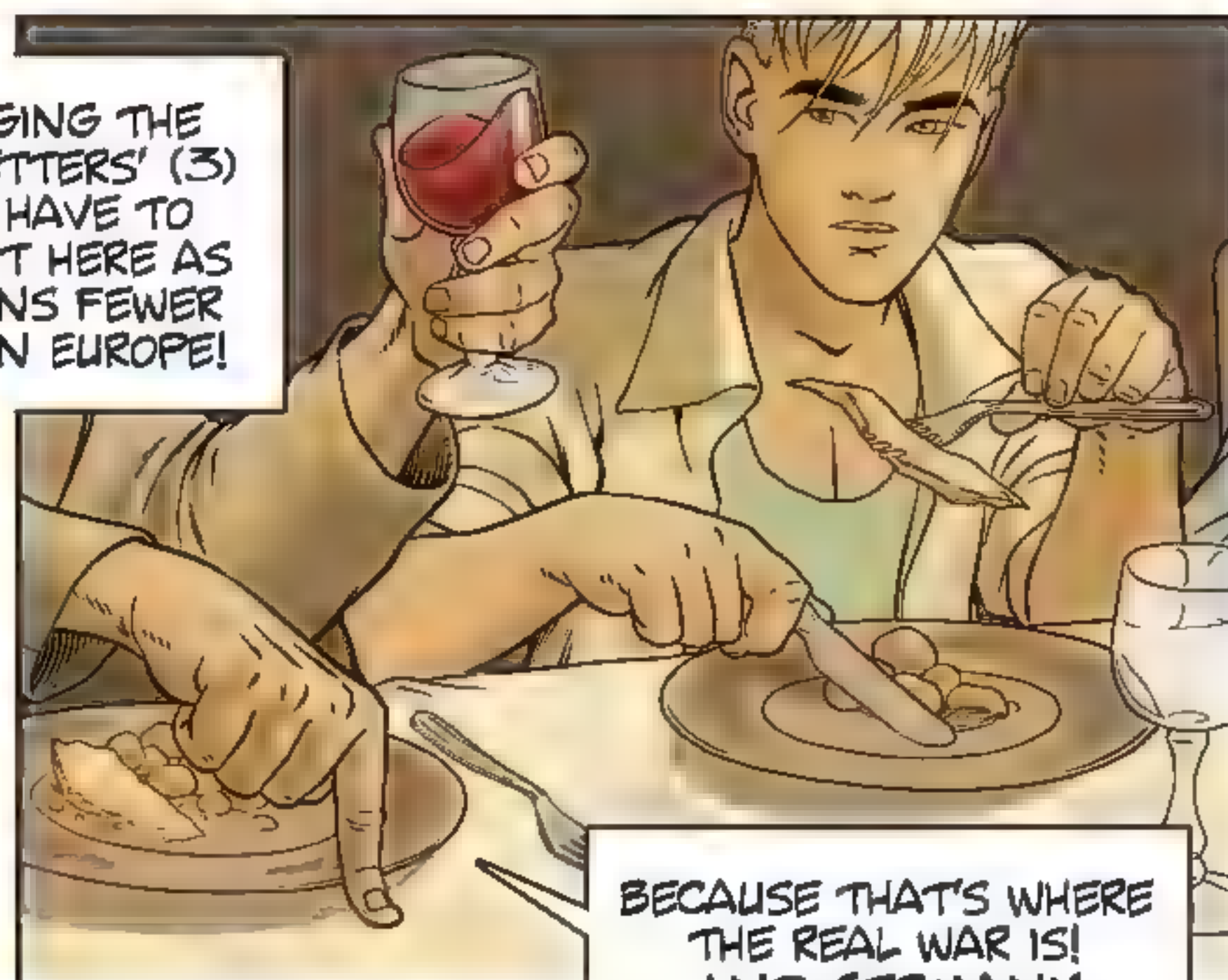
AND THAT'LL TURN THE WAR AROUND, WILL IT?



DON'T MOCK, LOTHAR. IT'S NEITHER CHRISTIAN NOR PATRIOTIC! FROM THE START, WE'VE KNOWN WE'LL NEVER WIN THE WAR IN EAST AFRICA. WE'RE BOTH OUTNUMBERED AND OUTGUNNED BY THE ENEMY FORCES.

THAT'S WHY OUR STRATEGY HASN'T CHANGED...

CONSTANTLY SABOTAGING THE TOMMIES' AND KIEKEFRETTERS' (3) BASES SO THAT THEY HAVE TO KEEP AS MANY MEN OUT HERE AS POSSIBLE--WHICH MEANS FEWER OF THEM TO FIGHT US IN EUROPE!



BECAUSE THAT'S WHERE THE REAL WAR IS! AND GERMANY WILL WIN IT!

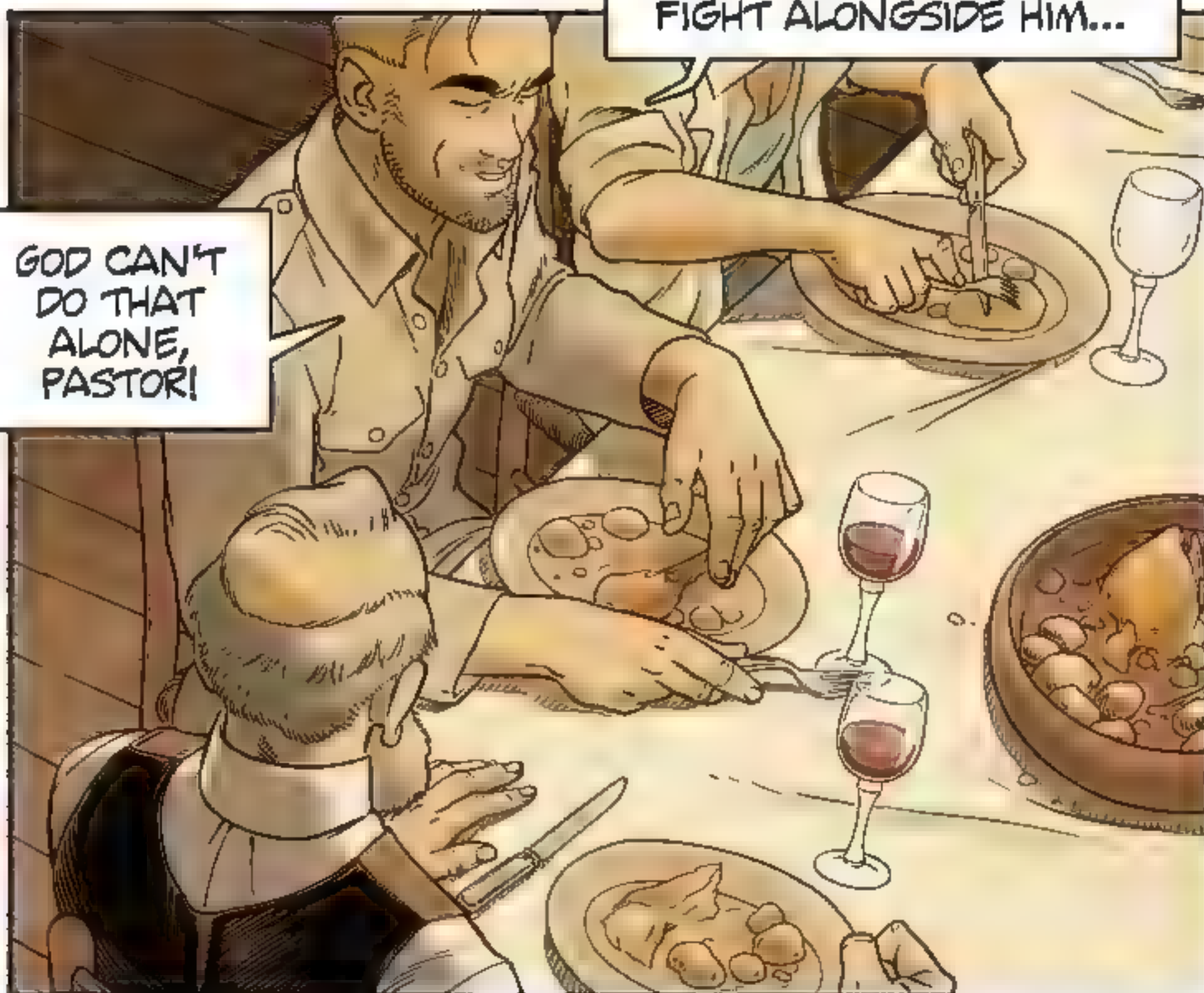
(1) ON THE BORDER WITH KENYA.

(2) THE BRITISH.

(3) "CHICKEN-CHOMPERS," I.E. THE BELGIANS.



I HOPE GOD IS LISTENING--AND PUTS AN END TO THIS SENSELESS SLAUGHTER!



HE NEEDS US ALL TO FIGHT ALONGSIDE HIM...

GOD CAN'T DO THAT ALONE, PASTOR!



...AND THAT MEANS YOU.



WHAT?

YOU WANT ME TO BECOME A MURDERER?

HAVE YOU GONE MAD, FRIEDRICH?



HOW DARE YOU ASK ME TO GO AGAINST MY CONSCIENCE AND GOD'S OWN COMMANDMENTS?

I'M NOT ASKING YOU TO SHOOT THE ENEMY, LOTHAR. WE HAVE ASKARIS FOR THAT.

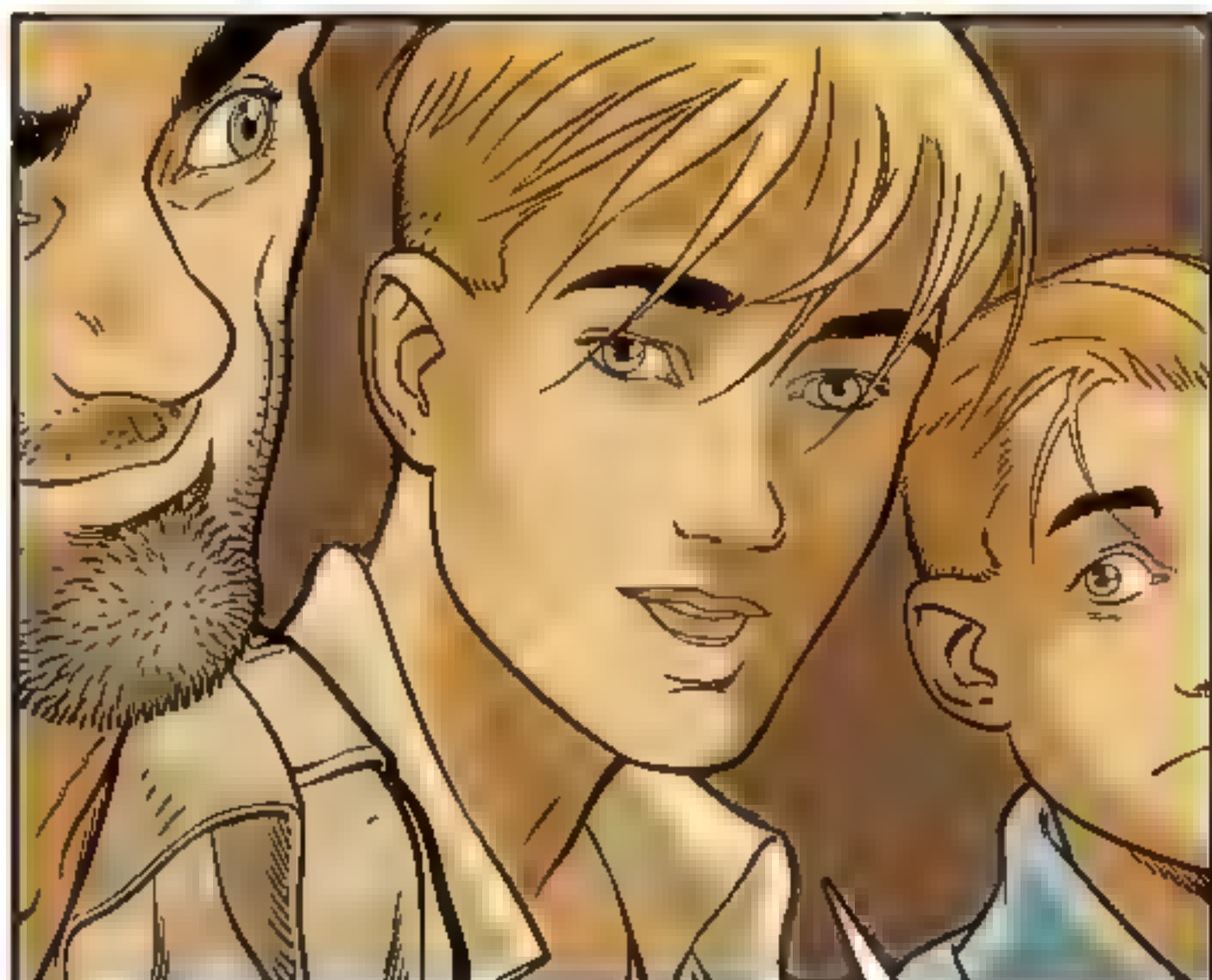


BUT YOU COULD BE OF GREAT SERVICE TO US BY LENDING US YOUR AIRPLANE TO SUPPORT THE RAID ON MOSHI!

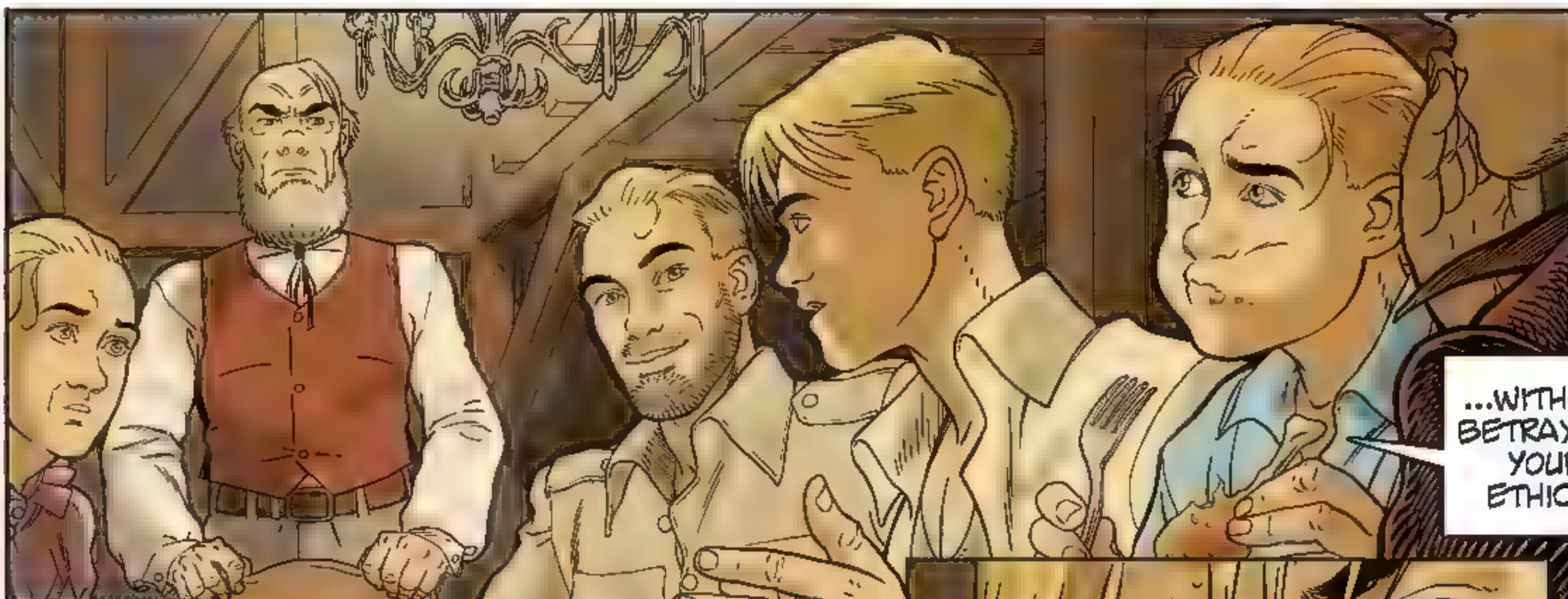


BY FLYING AHEAD OF OUR FRONT LINE, YOU COULD WARN US OF THE ENEMY'S POSITION AND TROOP MOVEMENTS...

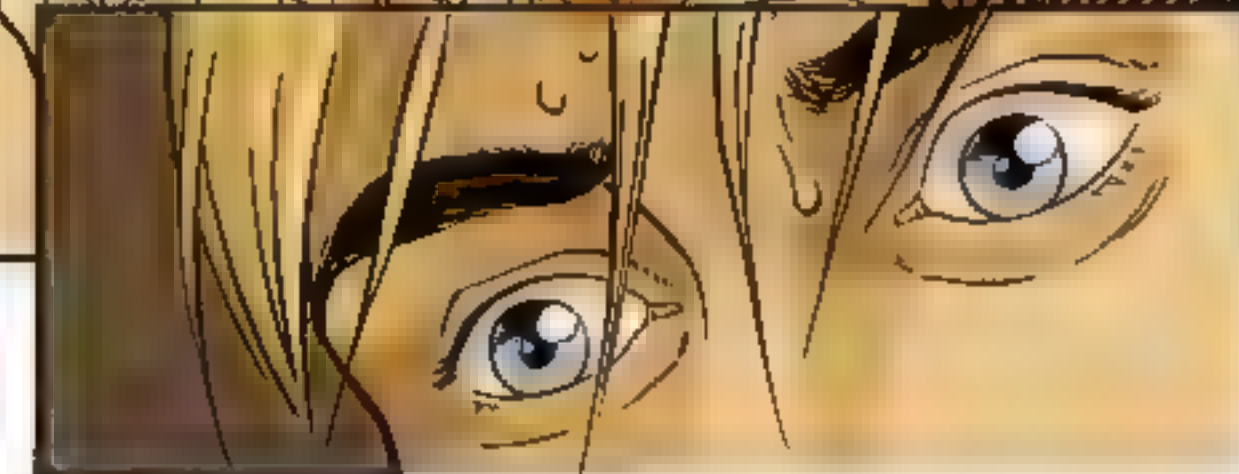
...WITHOUT HAVING TO KILL ANYONE!



THAT'S GREAT, FATHER! IT'S CALLED AERIAL RECONNAISSANCE. I READ AN ARTICLE IN A MAGAZINE ABOUT USING AIRPLANES THIS WAY IN MODERN WARFARE.

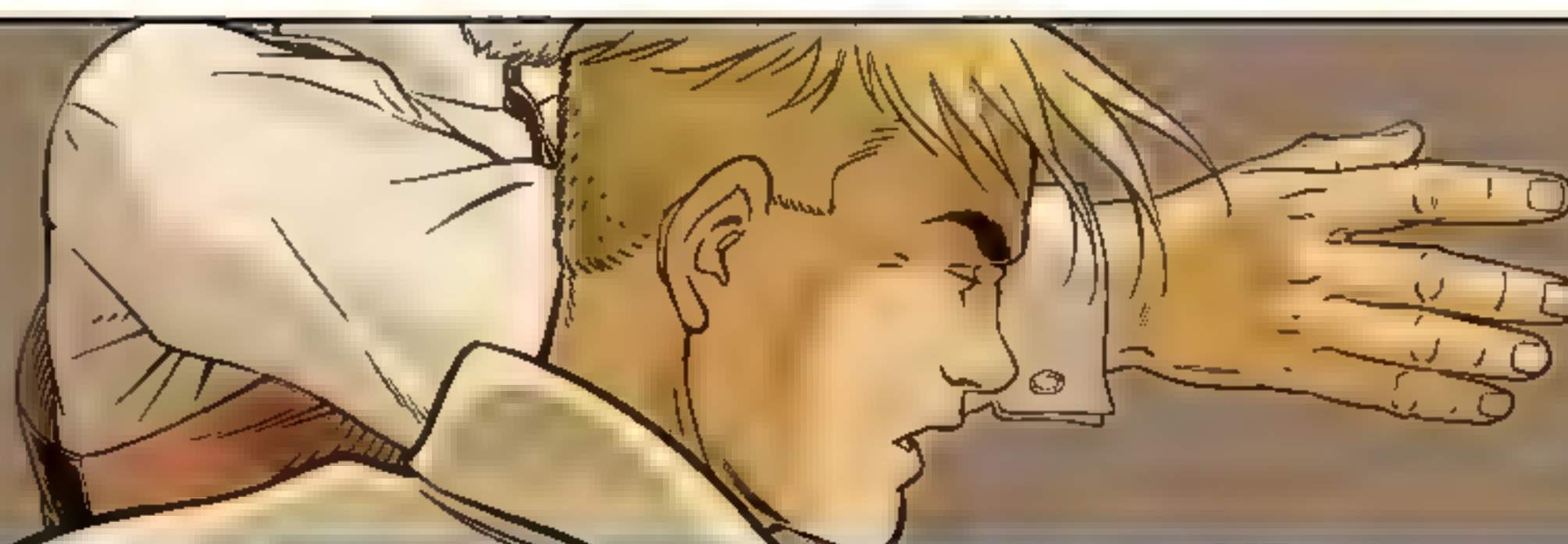


THAT WAY, YOU COULD DO YOUR DUTY AS A GERMAN... UH...



...WITHOUT BETRAYING YOUR ETHICS.

I DON'T KNOW IF I
THOUGHT KISSING A WOMAN
HAD SUDDENLY TURNED ME
INTO A MAN, BUT MY FATHER
QUICKLY DISABUSED ME ON
THAT SCORE.



WELL-MANNERED
TEENAGERS
DIDN'T INTERRUPT
ADULTS'
CONVERSATIONS
UNLESS THEY
WERE INVITED
TO DO SO.

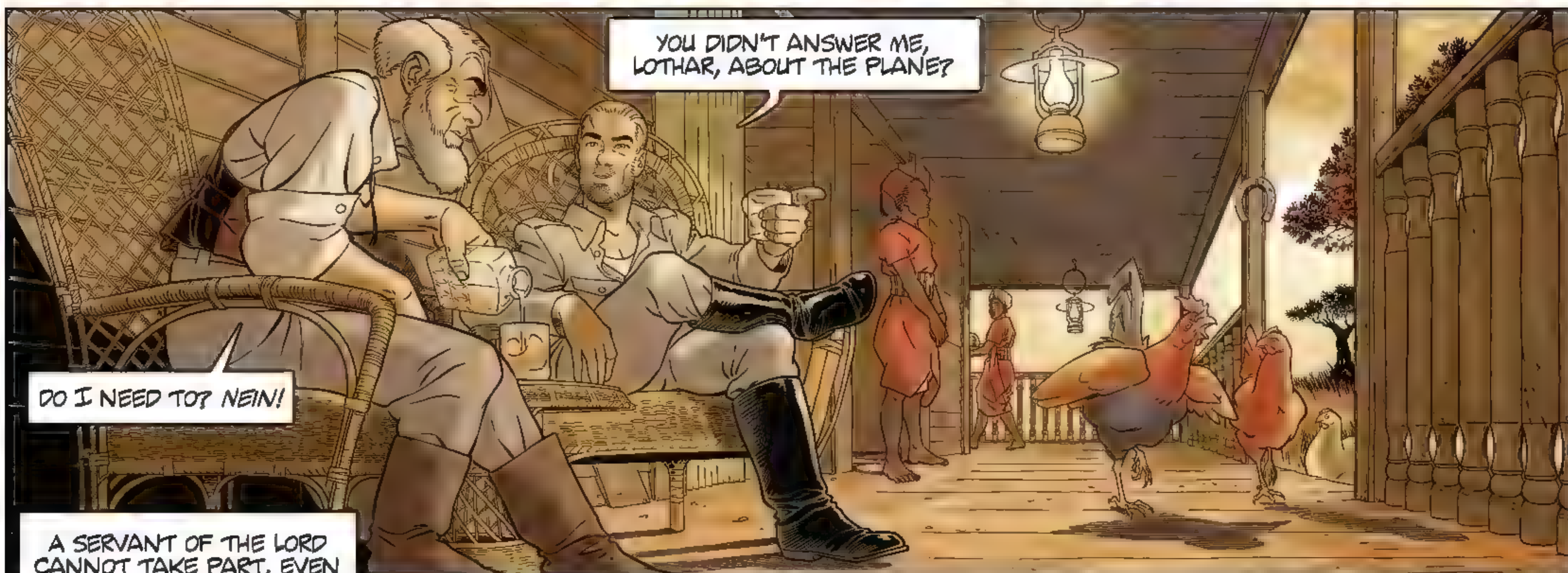
YOU'RE
GROUNDED FOR
TWO WEEKS,
JOSEF, STARTING
NOW! GET YOUR
THINGS.



YOU DIDN'T ANSWER ME,
LOTHAR, ABOUT THE PLANE?

DO I NEED TO? NEIN!

A SERVANT OF THE LORD
CANNOT TAKE PART, EVEN
INDIRECTLY, IN ANY ACTION
THAT IS BY ITS VERY
NATURE CONTRARY TO
THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.



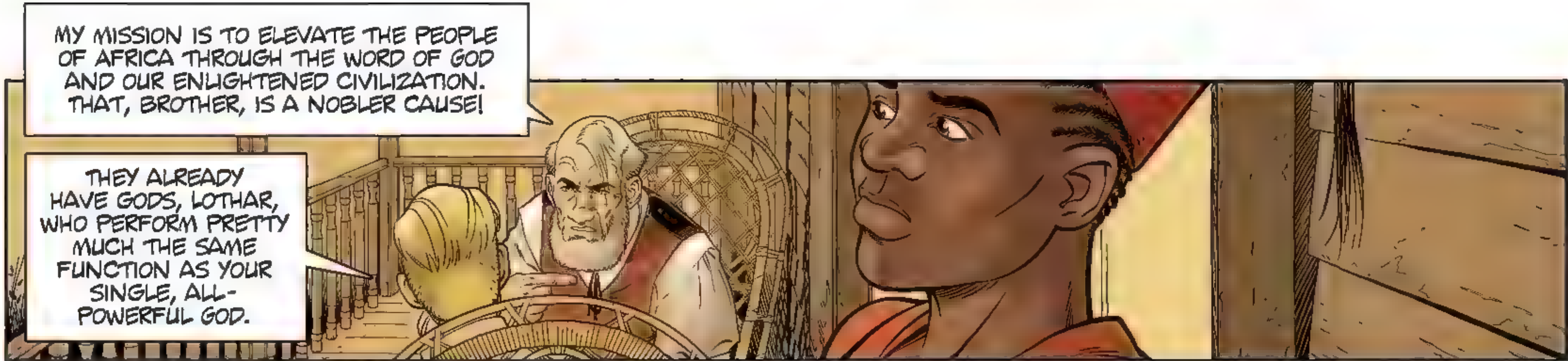
YOU FOOL!
IS IT HONORABLE FOR
A MAN TO SKEWER HIS
NEIGHBOR WITH A
BAYONET? TO RAPE
WOMEN? TO PLUNDER
AND PILLAGE?

WAR IS
THE DEVIL'S
WORK!

IT MERELY
BRINGS OUT
MAN'S DARK
SIDE.

AAAAH, THE SACROSANCT
SCRIPTURES! WHAT A
CONVENIENT EXCUSE FOR
NOT PUTTING YOUR LIFE IN
DANGER! BUT WHAT ABOUT
YOUR COUNTRY, LOTHAR,
AND YOUR HONOR?





MY MISSION IS TO ELEVATE THE PEOPLE OF AFRICA THROUGH THE WORD OF GOD AND OUR ENLIGHTENED CIVILIZATION. THAT, BROTHER, IS A NOBLER CAUSE!

THEY ALREADY HAVE GODS, LOTHAR, WHO PERFORM PRETTY MUCH THE SAME FUNCTION AS YOUR SINGLE, ALL-POWERFUL GOD.



BLASPHEMY! HOW DARE YOU?

AND AS FOR YOUR "CIVILIZATION"...

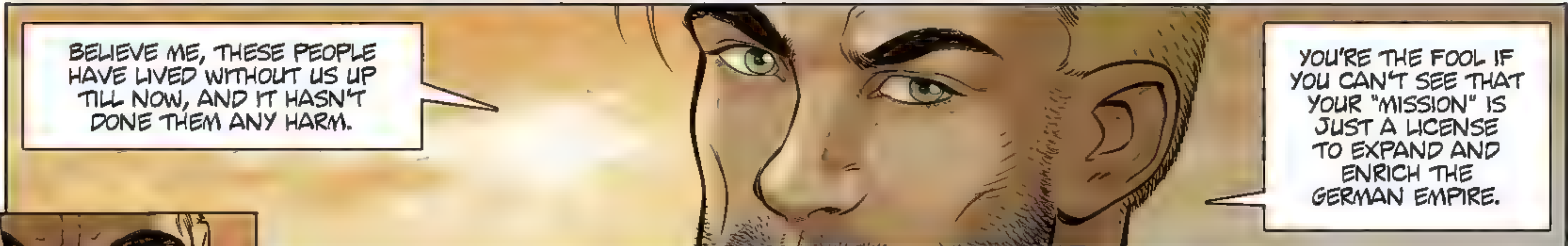


...IT DOESN'T SEEM VERY "ENLIGHTENED" TO ME. YOU AND CONSTANCE TEACHING BLACK CHILDREN TO READ? TO TURN THEM INTO WHAT?

CLEVER MONKEYS?

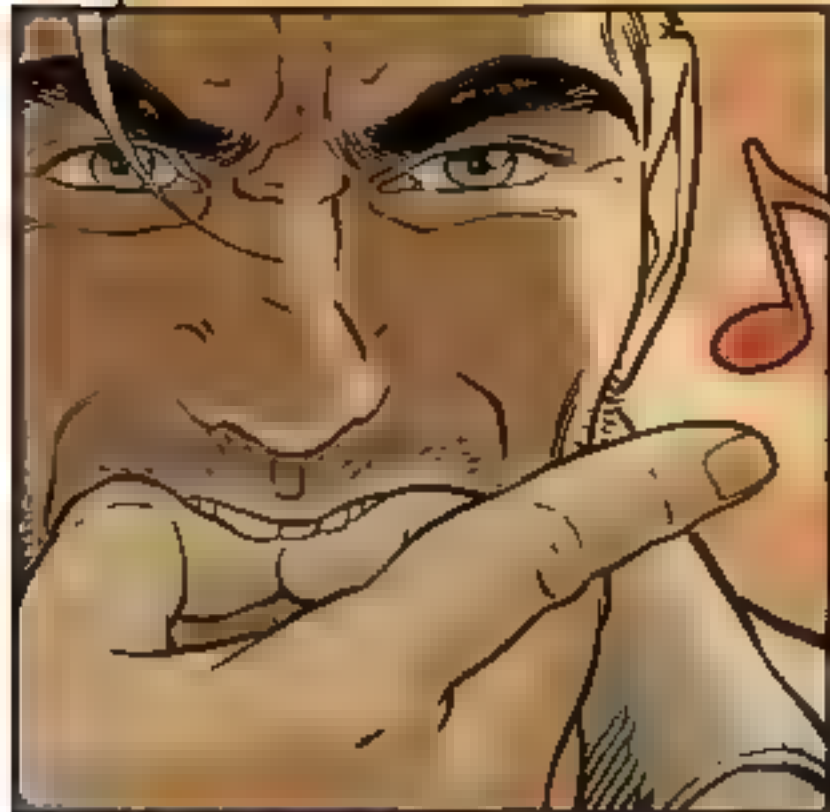


AND YOU WANT TO BE THEIR DOCTOR, BUT WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT AFRICAN ILLNESSES? CAN YOU DO ANY BETTER THAN THEIR WITCH DOCTORS?



BELIEVE ME, THESE PEOPLE HAVE LIVED WITHOUT US UP TILL NOW, AND IT HASN'T DONE THEM ANY HARM.

YOU'RE THE FOOL IF YOU CAN'T SEE THAT YOUR "MISSION" IS JUST A LICENSE TO EXPAND AND ENRICH THE GERMAN EMPIRE.



AND I SINCERELY HOPE, FRIEDRICH, THAT YOUR GERMAN EMPIRE WON'T ONE DAY COME TO REGRET HAVING TAUGHT ILLITERATE AFRICANS HOW TO CONDUCT MODERN WARFARE.

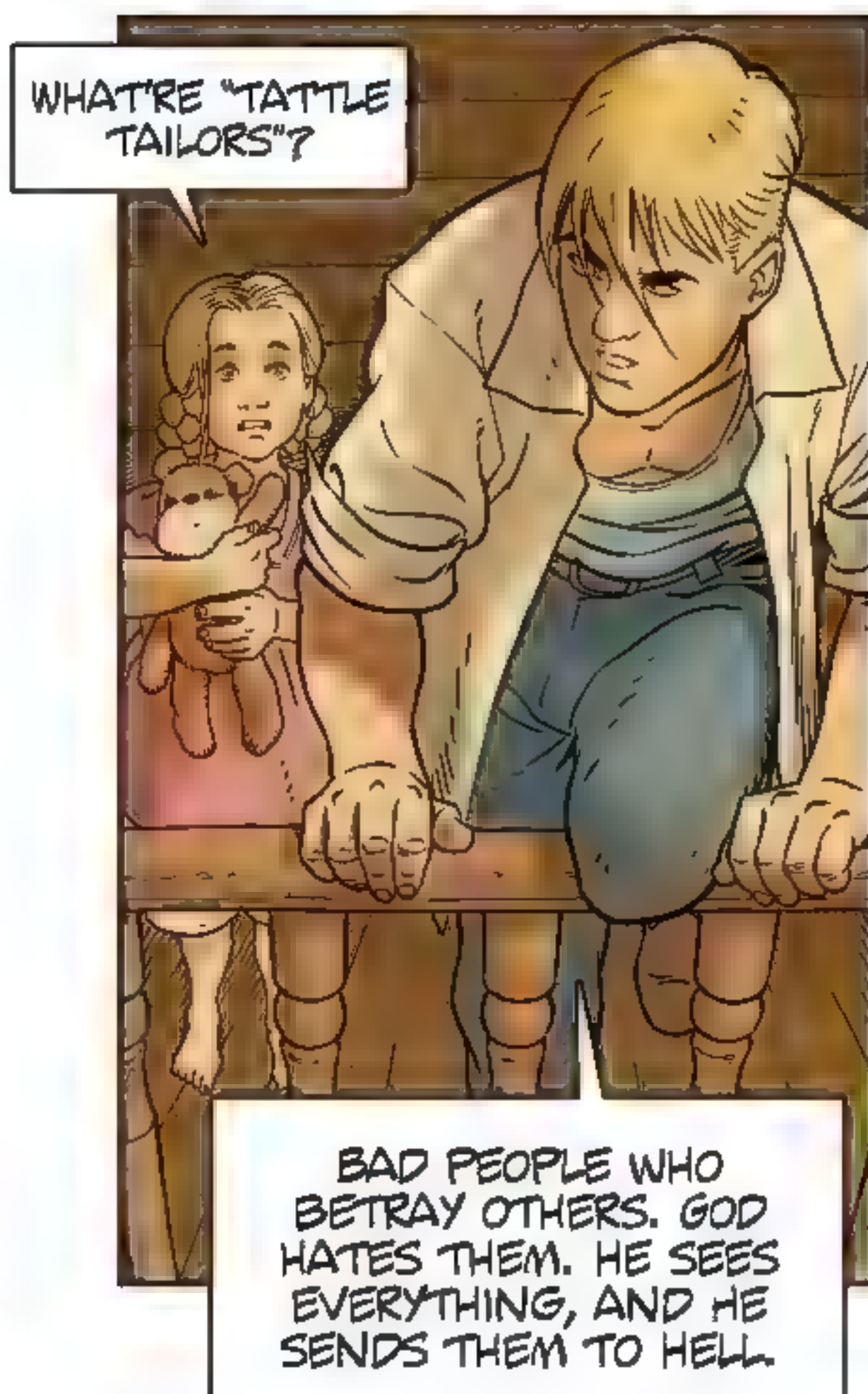
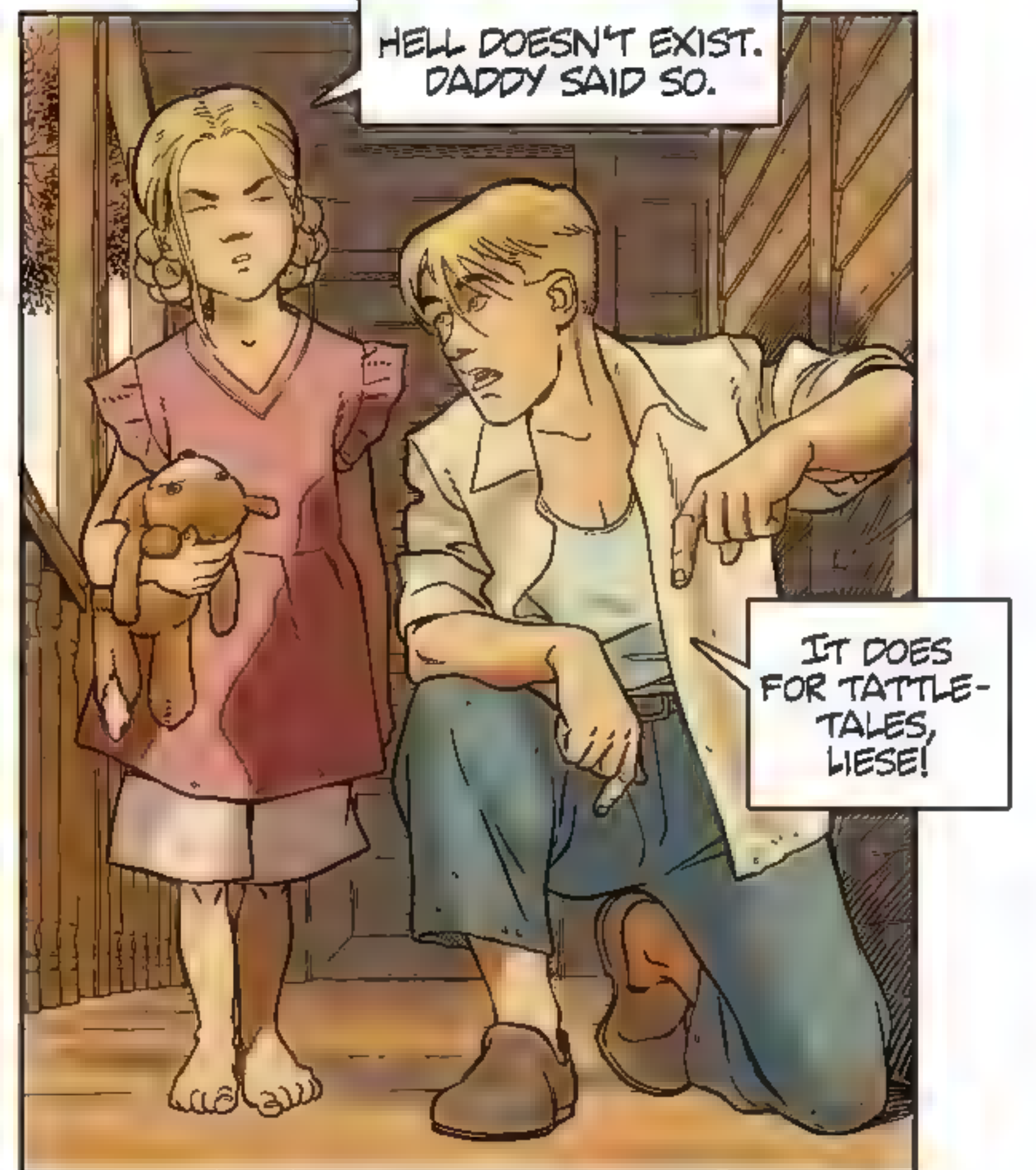
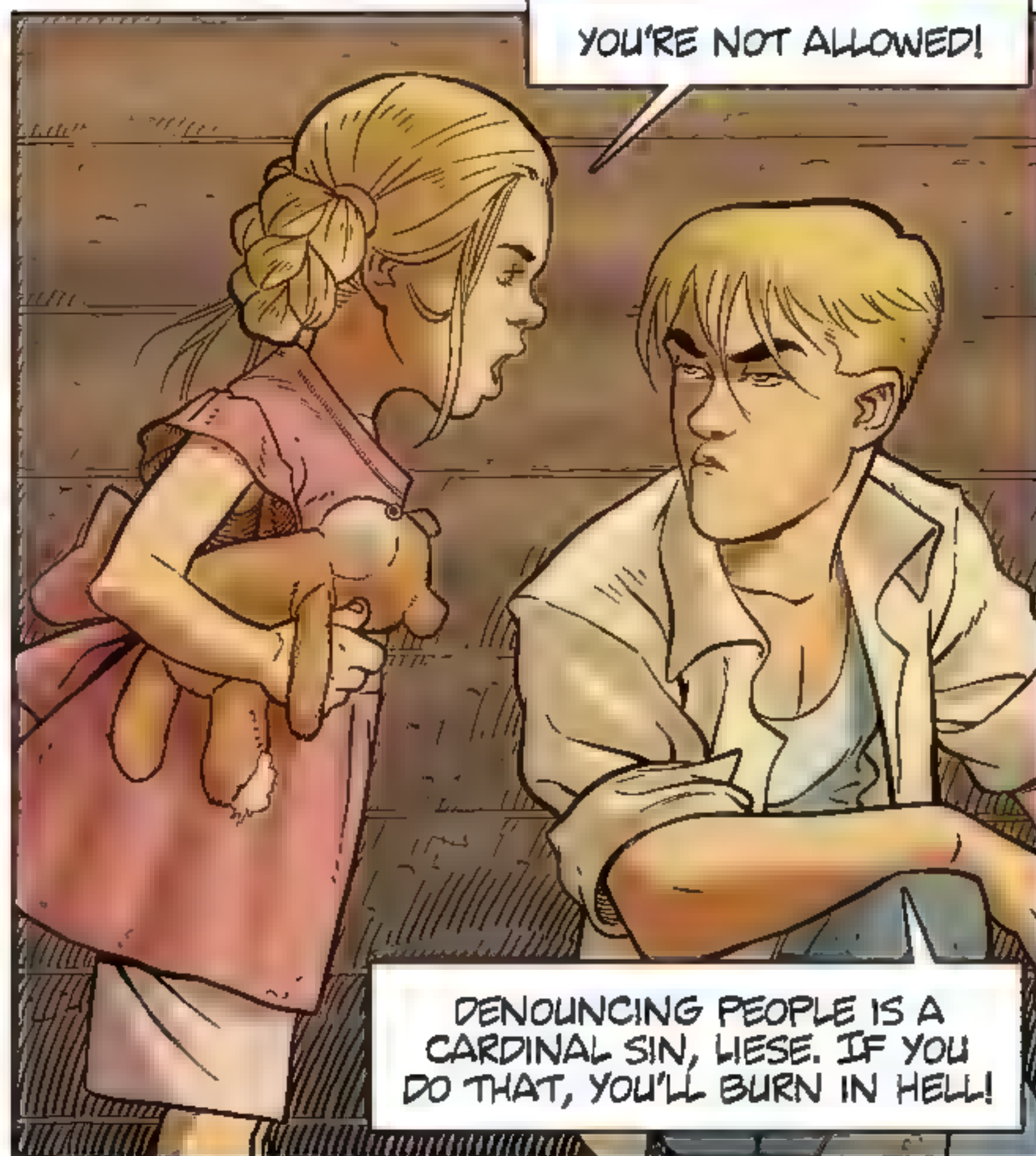
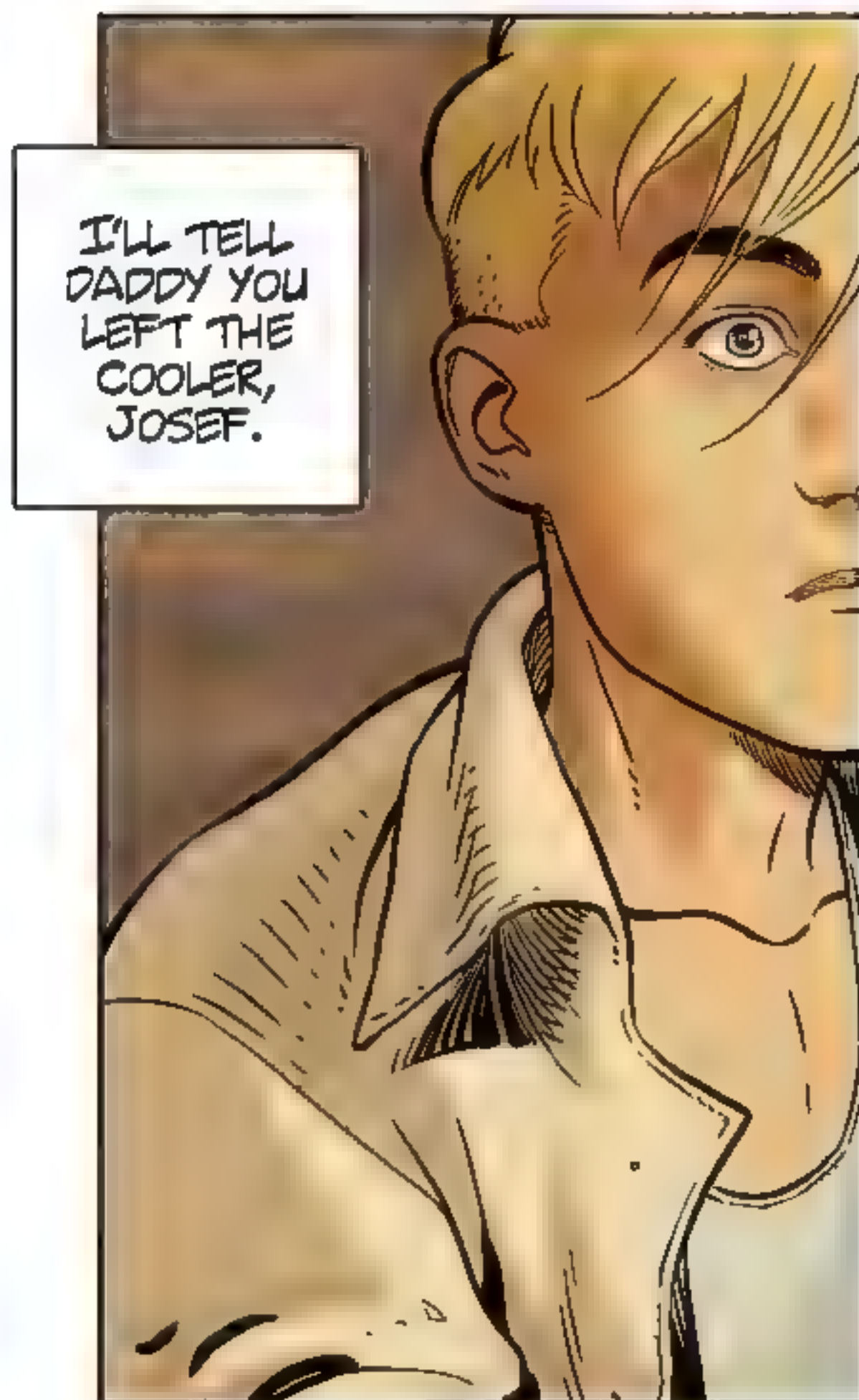
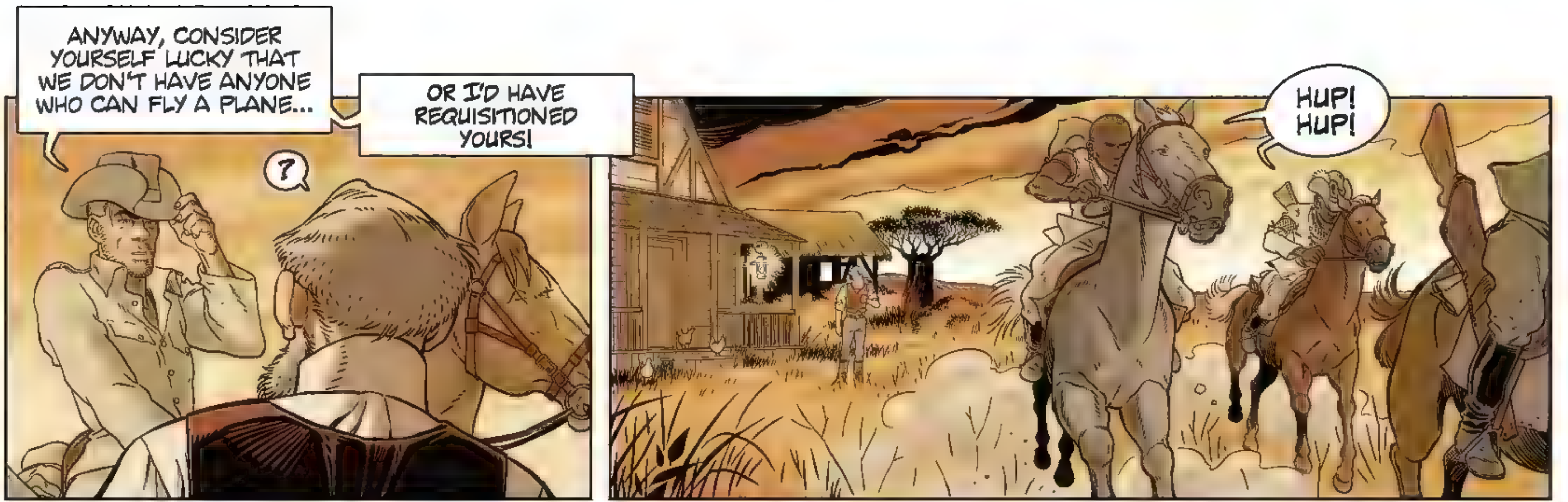
IT MIGHT, LOTHAR...

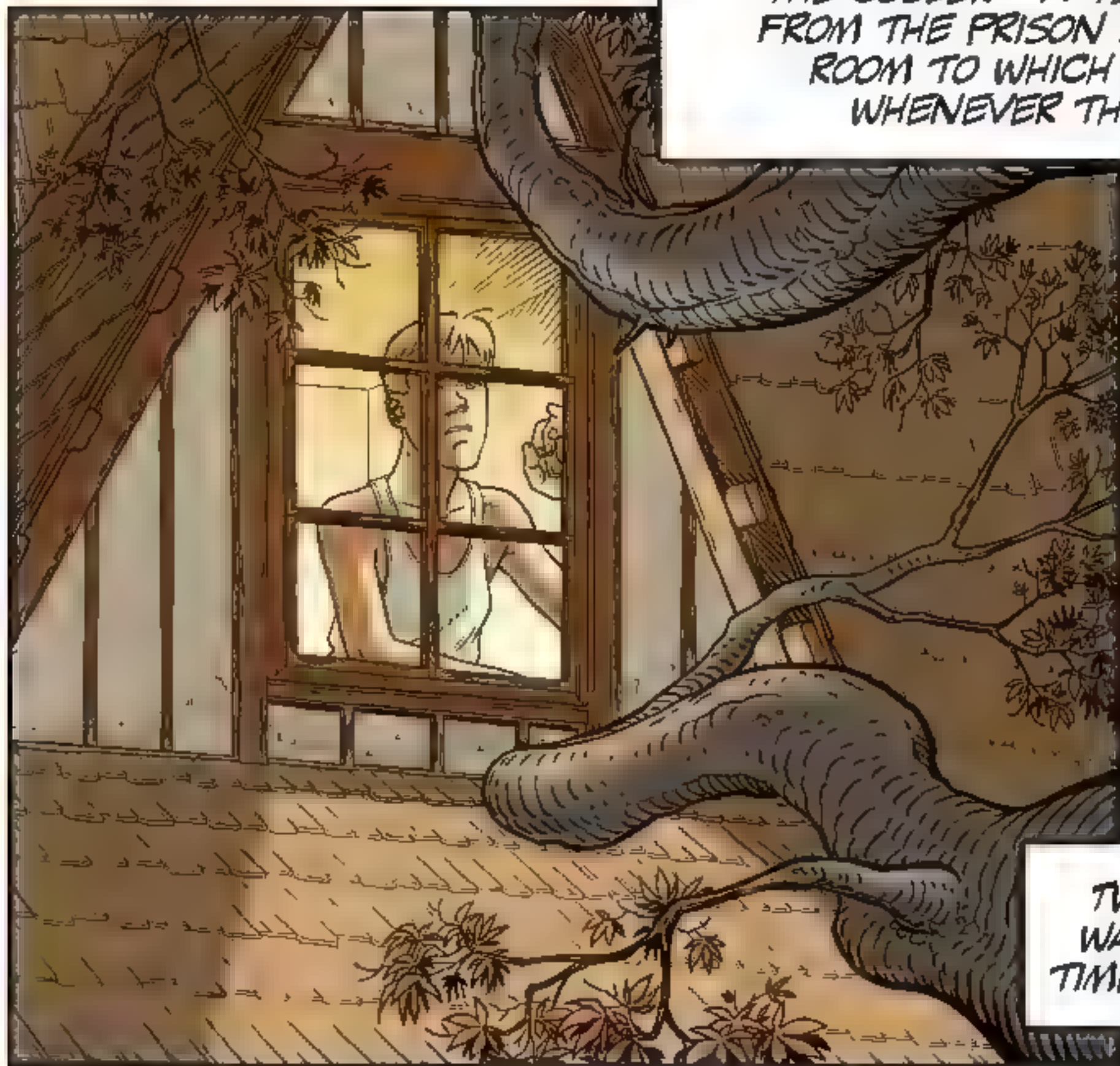


IT MIGHT!

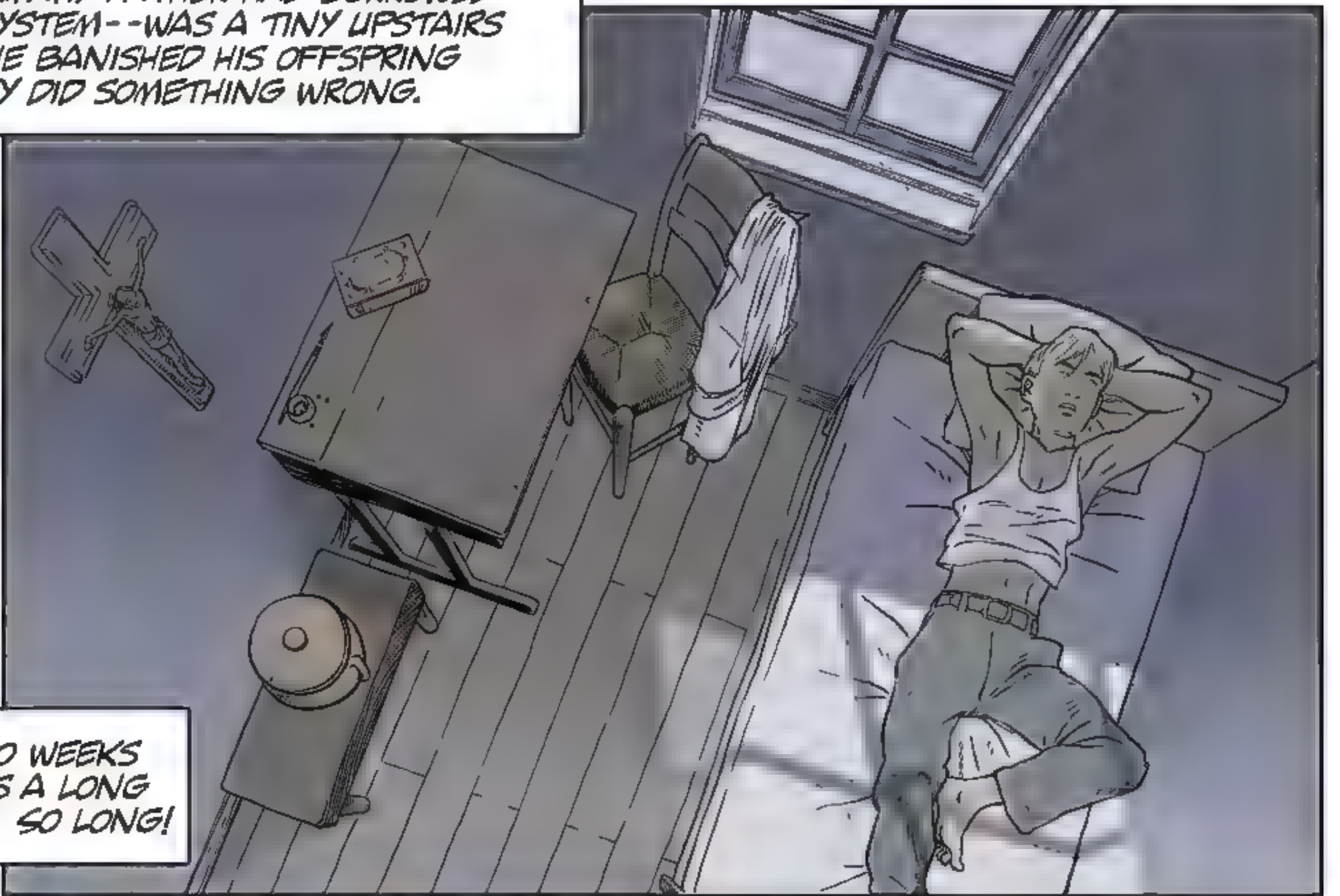
BUT THEY HAVEN'T YET LEARNED HOW TO MANUFACTURE GUNS!



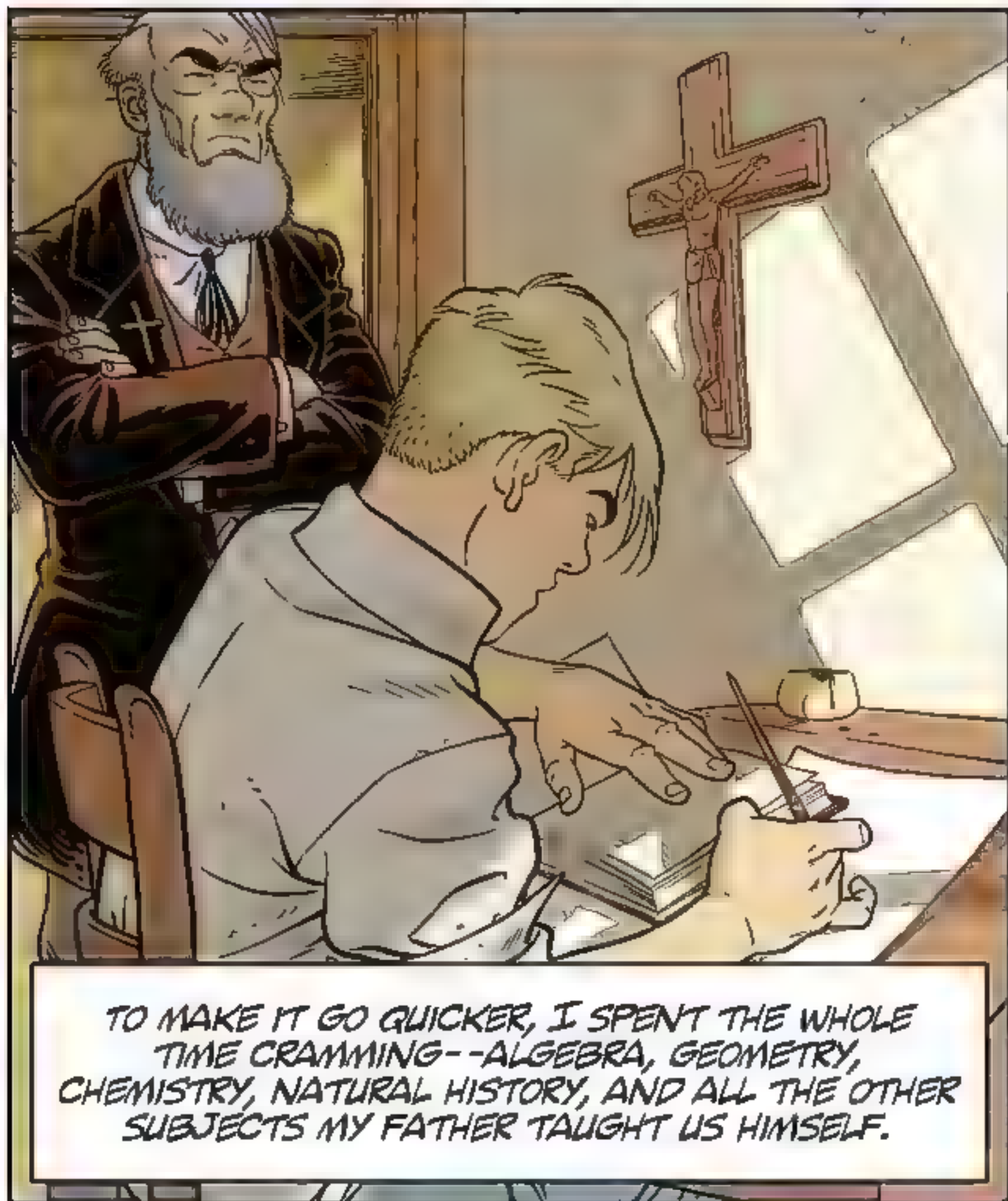




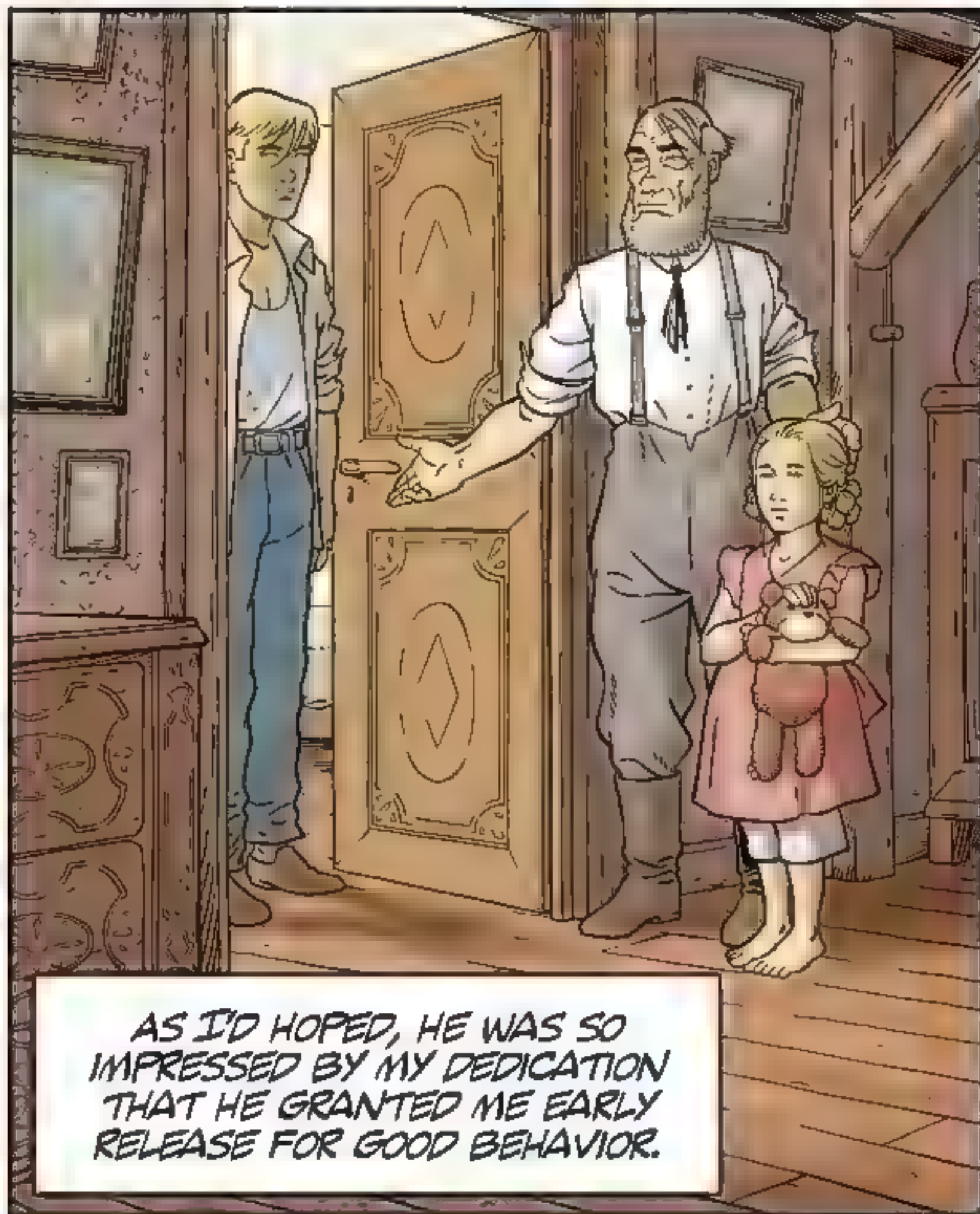
THE COOLER--A TERM MY FATHER HAD BORROWED FROM THE PRISON SYSTEM--WAS A TINY UPSTAIRS ROOM TO WHICH HE BANISHED HIS OFFSPRING WHENEVER THEY DID SOMETHING WRONG.



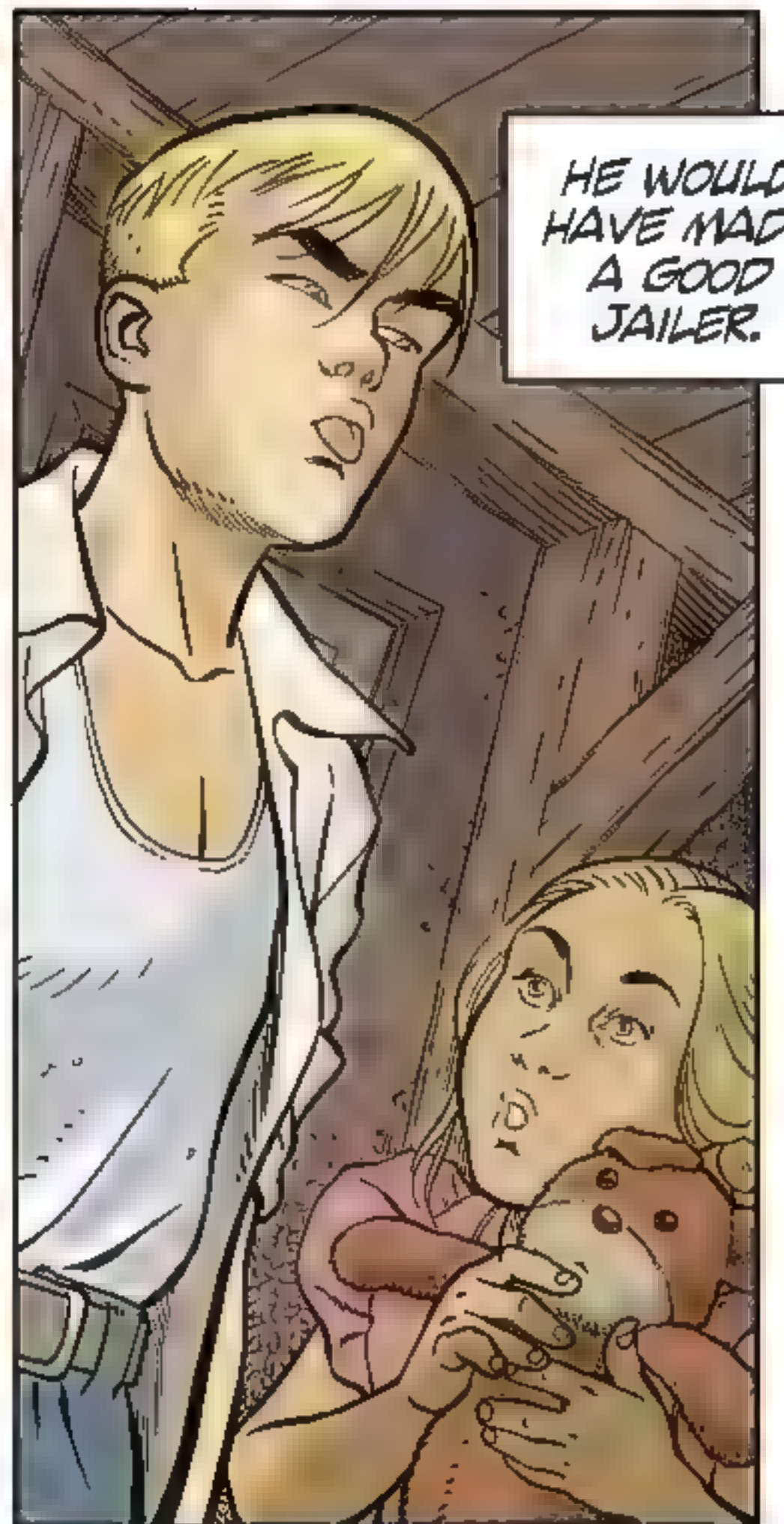
TWO WEEKS WAS A LONG TIME. SO LONG!



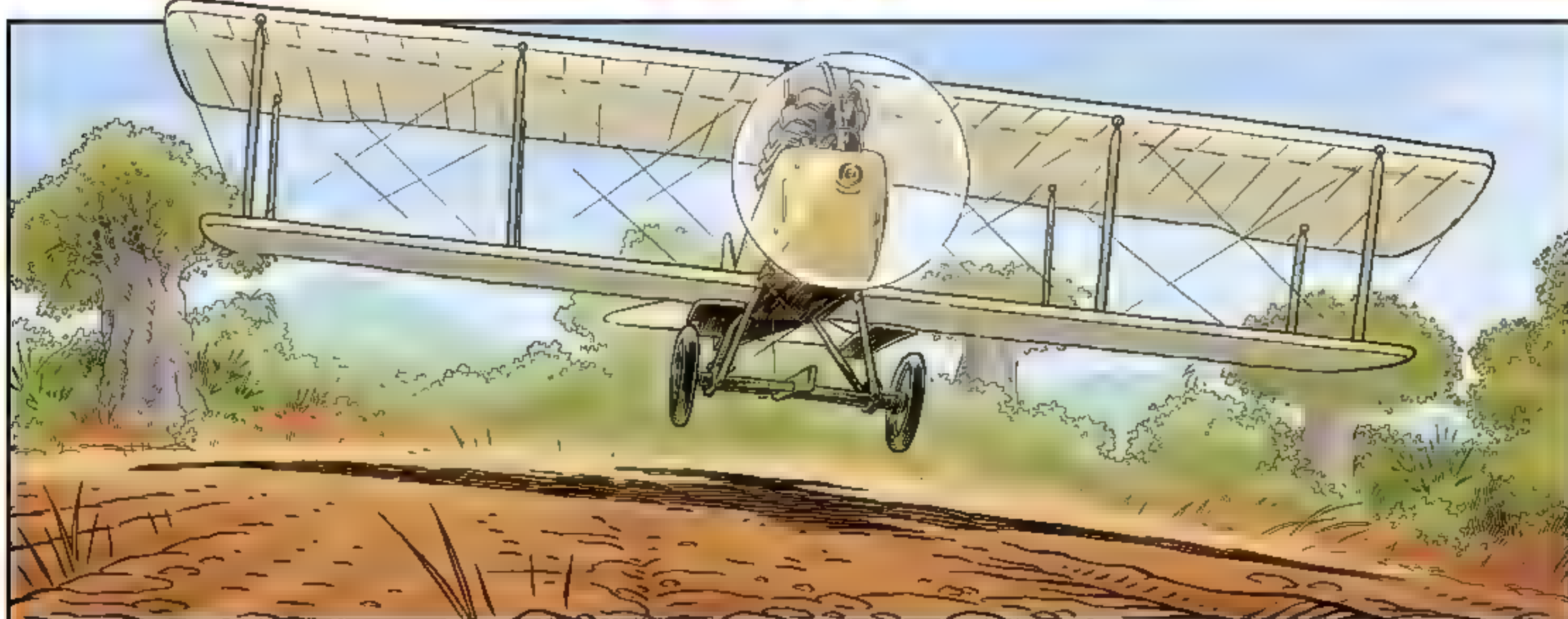
TO MAKE IT GO QUICKER, I SPENT THE WHOLE TIME CRAMMING--ALGEBRA, GEOMETRY, CHEMISTRY, NATURAL HISTORY, AND ALL THE OTHER SUBJECTS MY FATHER TAUGHT US HIMSELF.



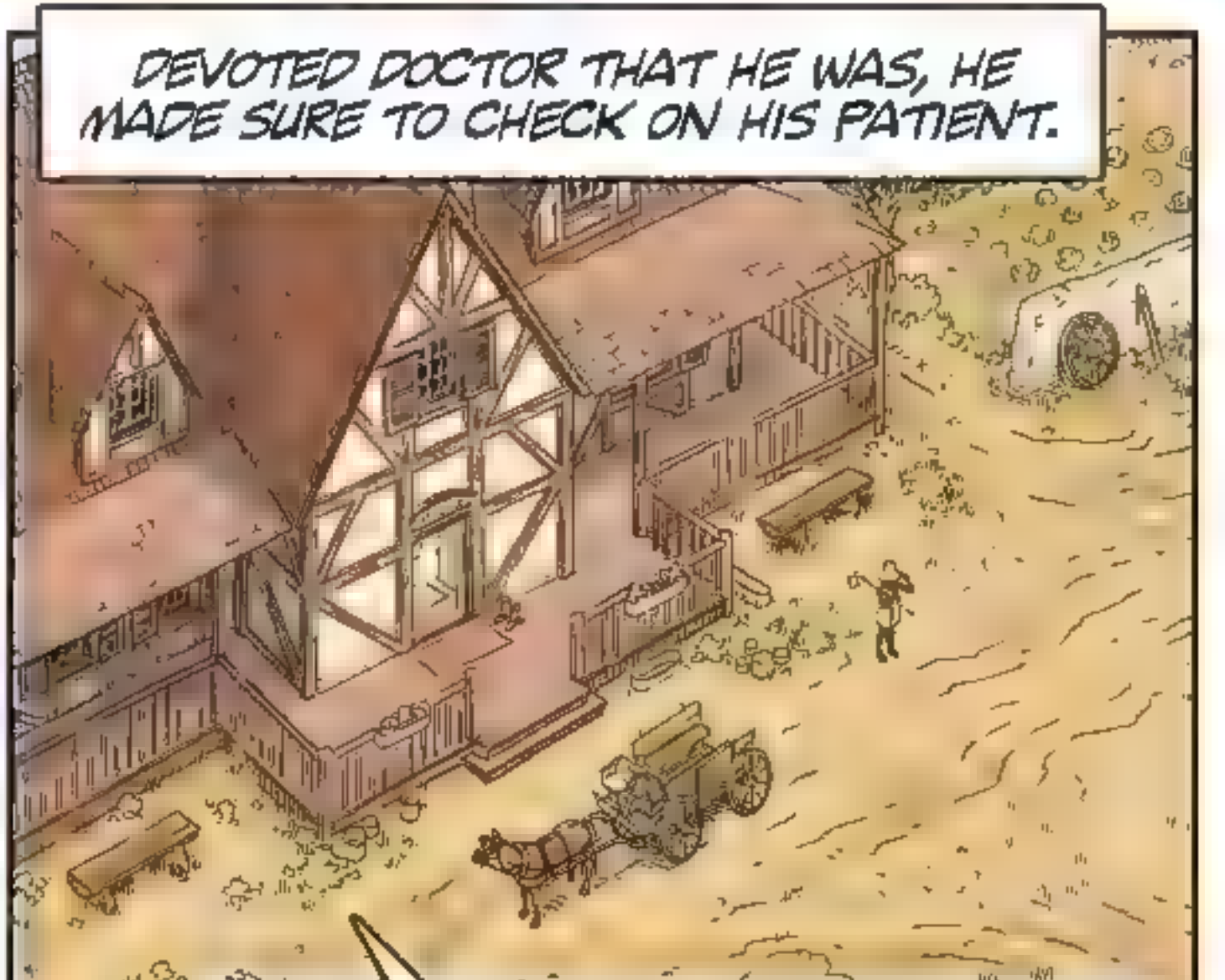
AS I'D HOPED, HE WAS SO IMPRESSED BY MY DEDICATION THAT HE GRANTED ME EARLY RELEASE FOR GOOD BEHAVIOR.



HE WOULD HAVE MADE A GOOD JAILER.

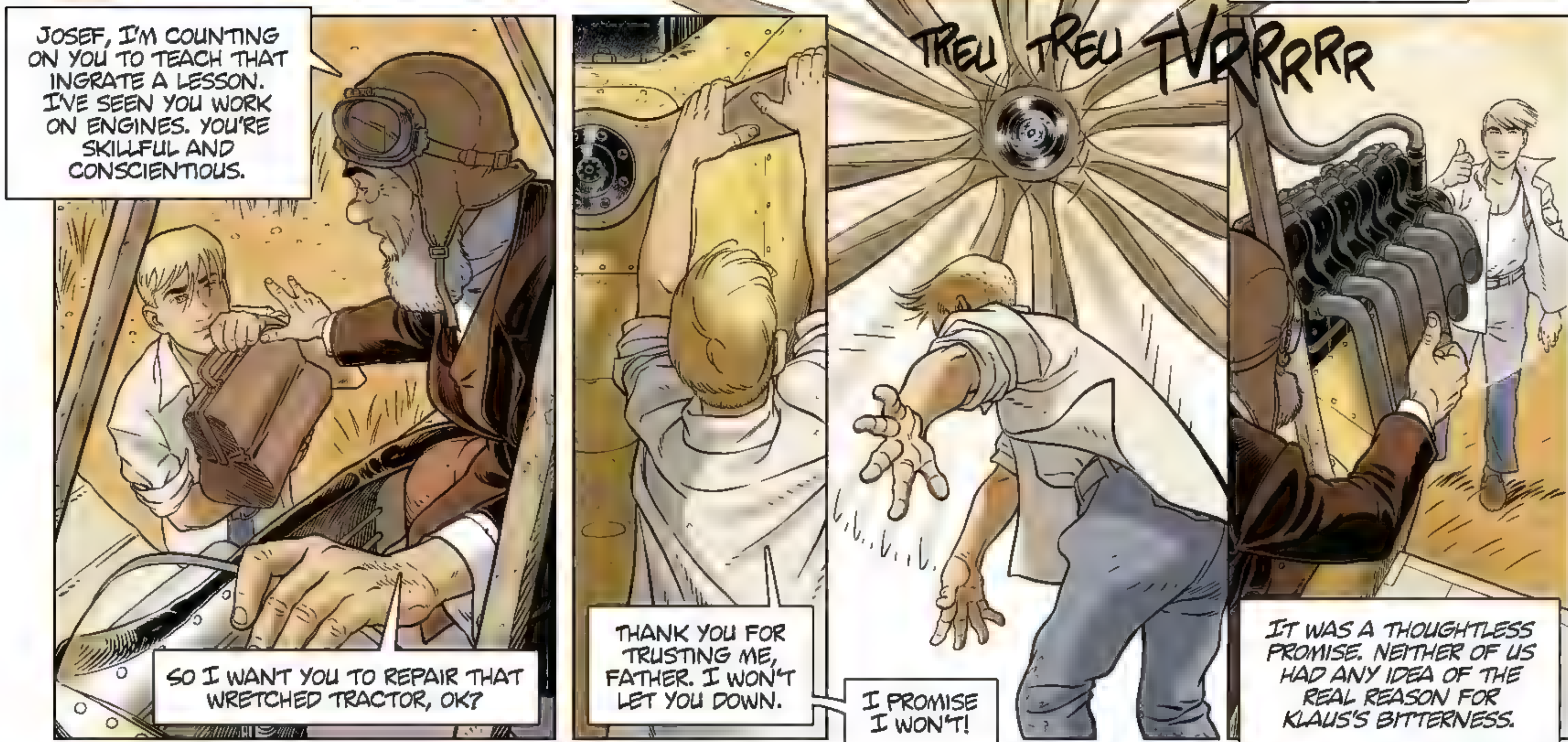
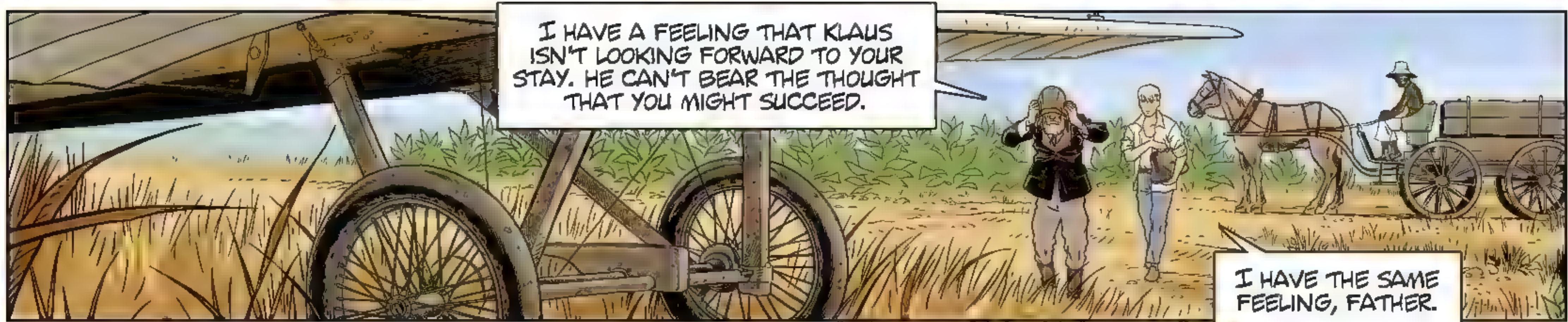


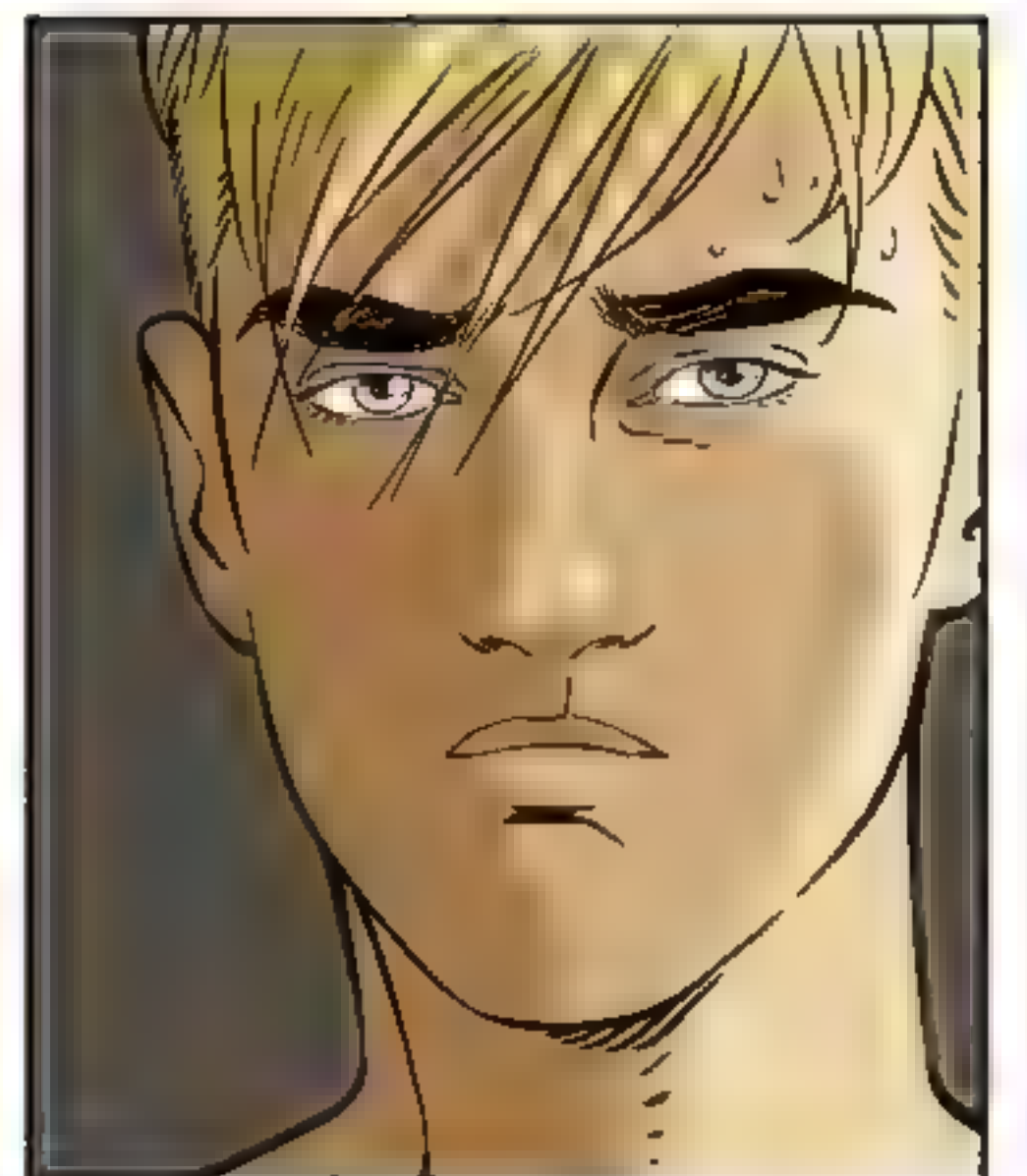
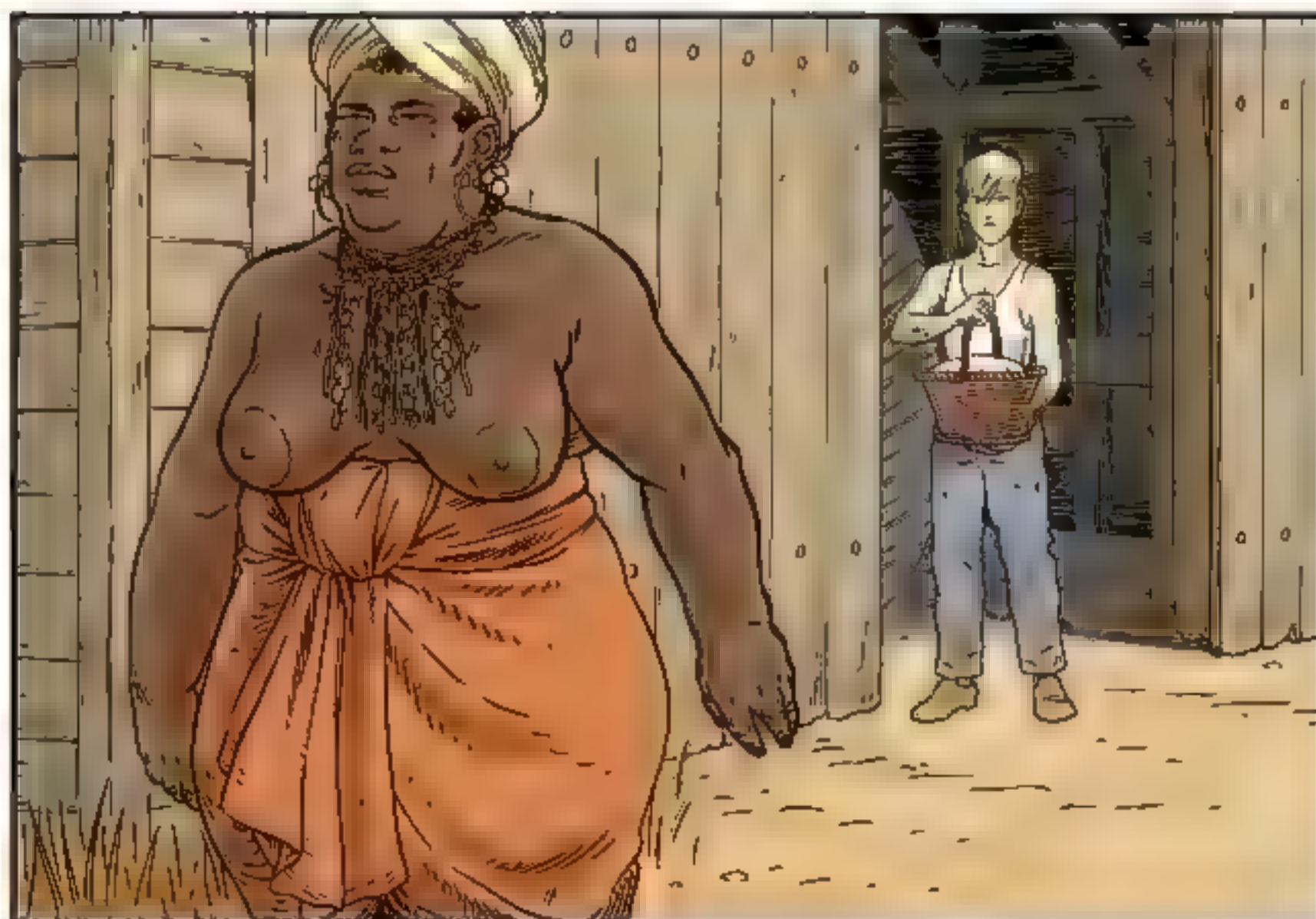
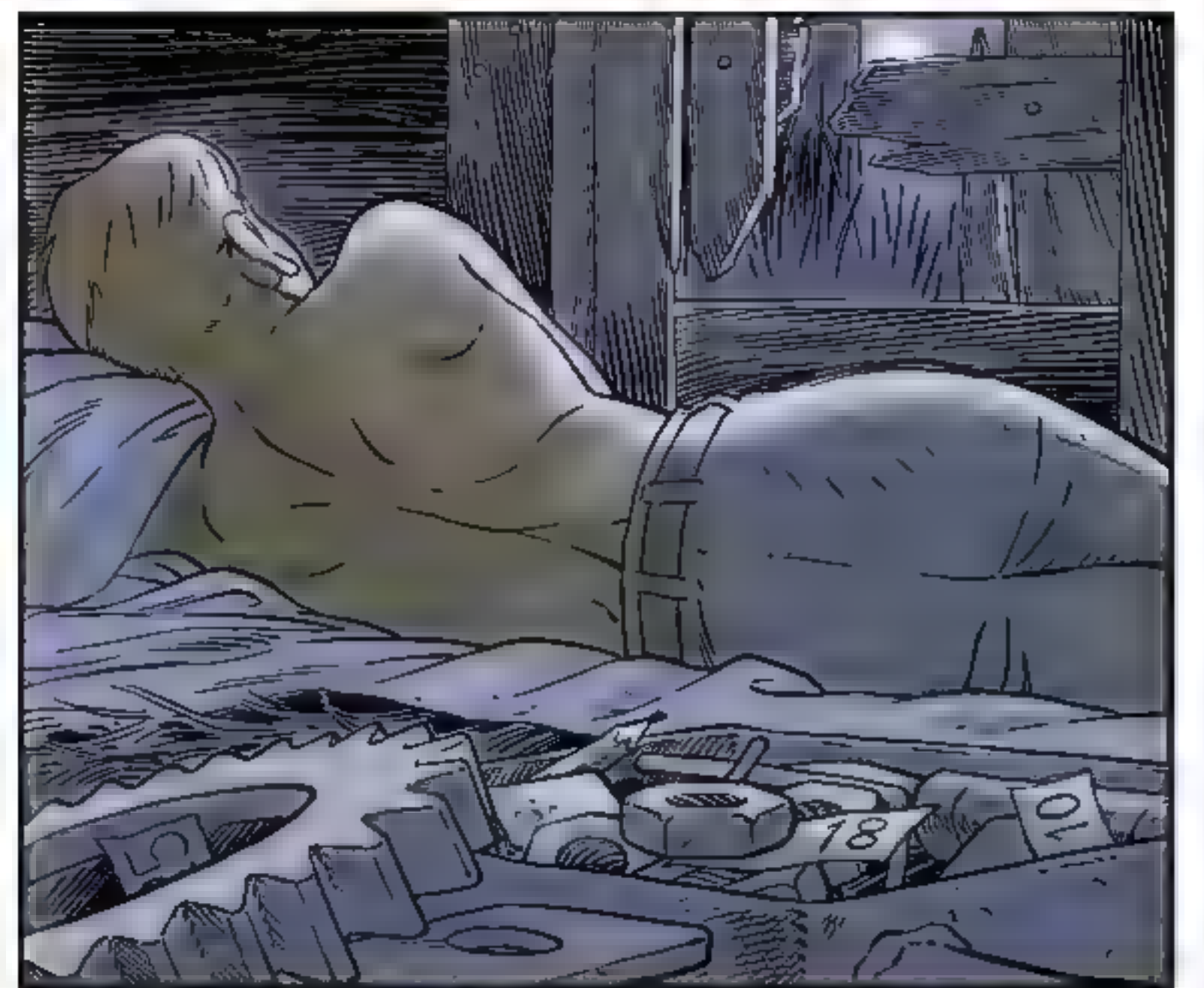
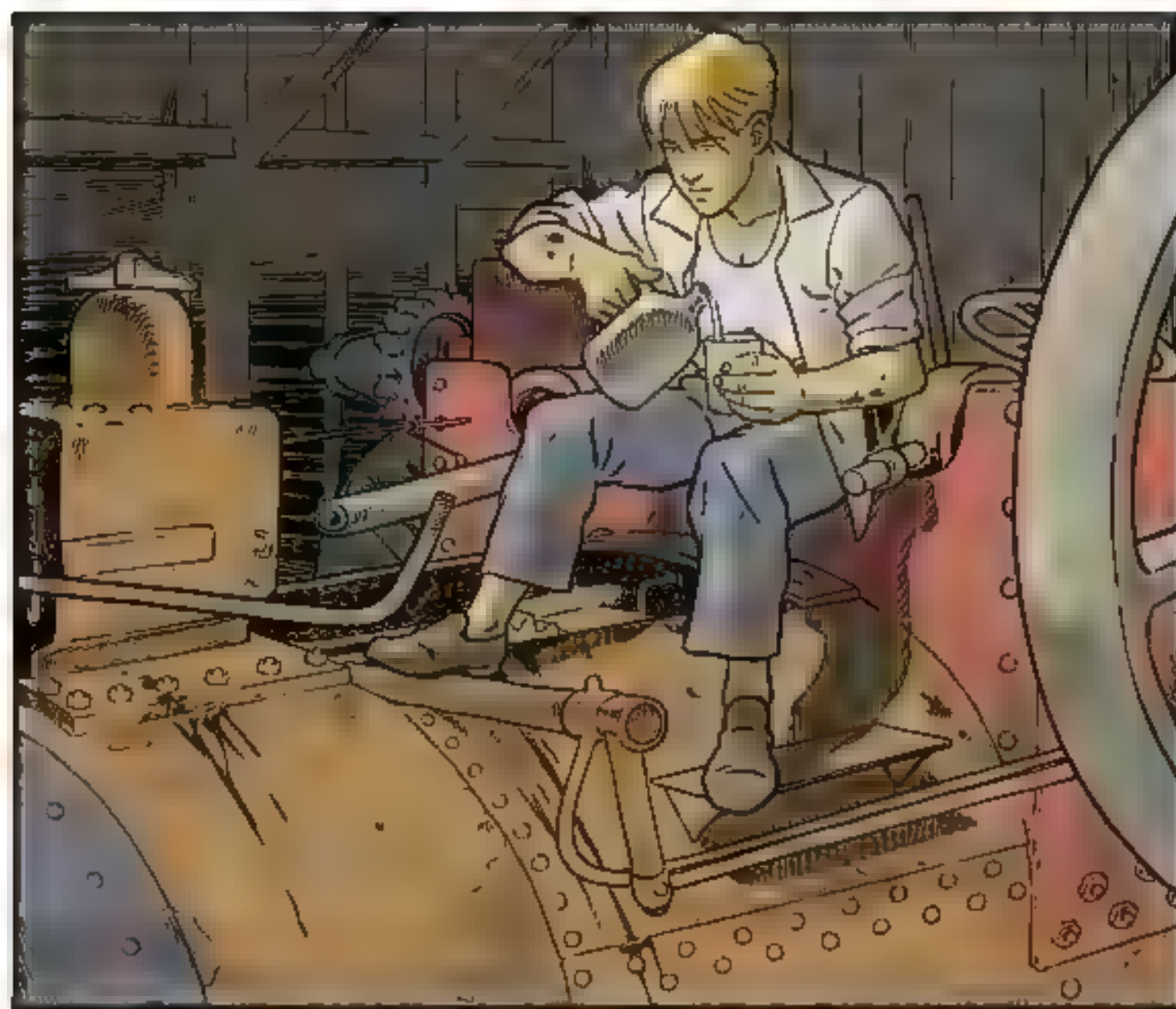
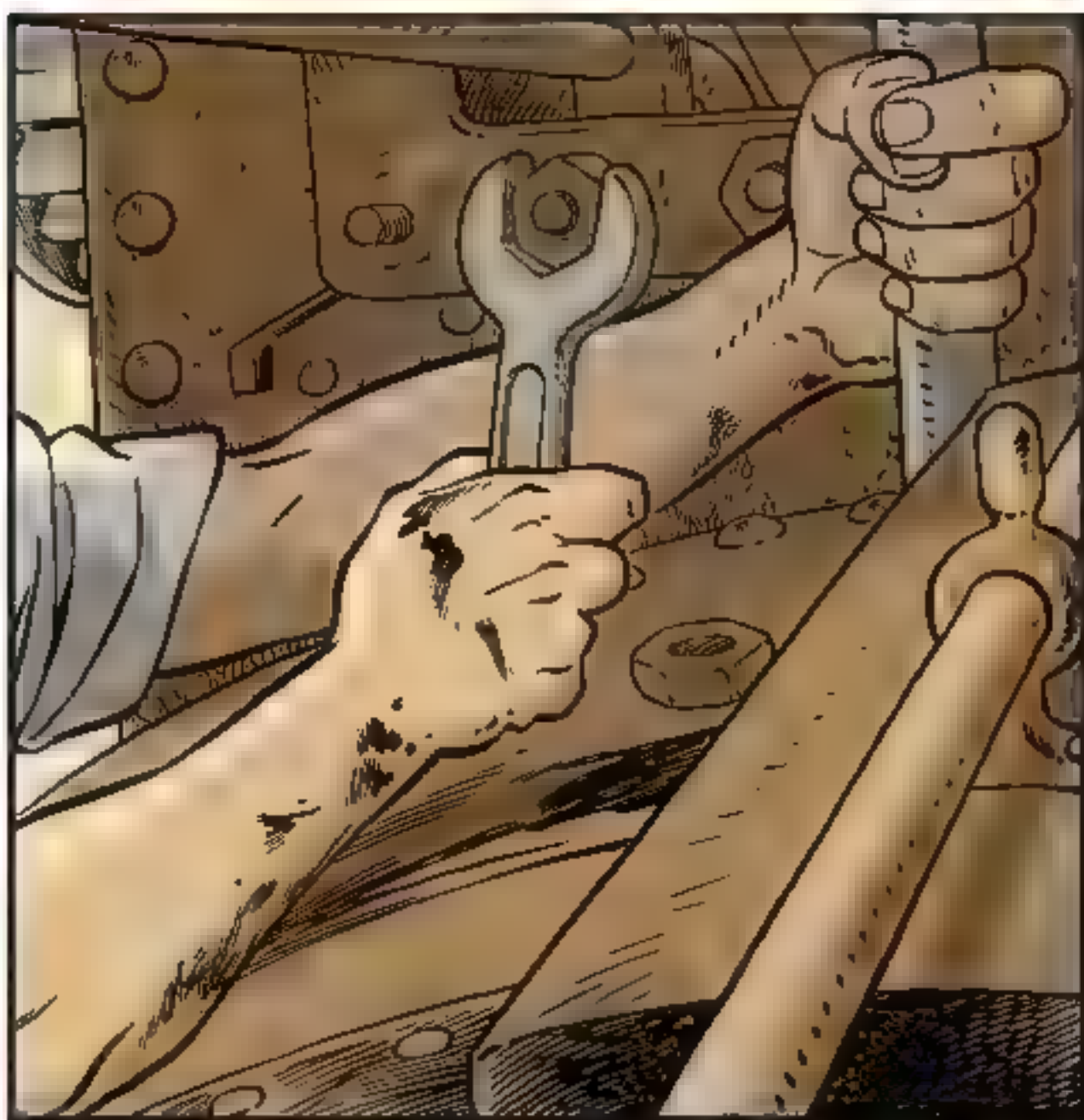
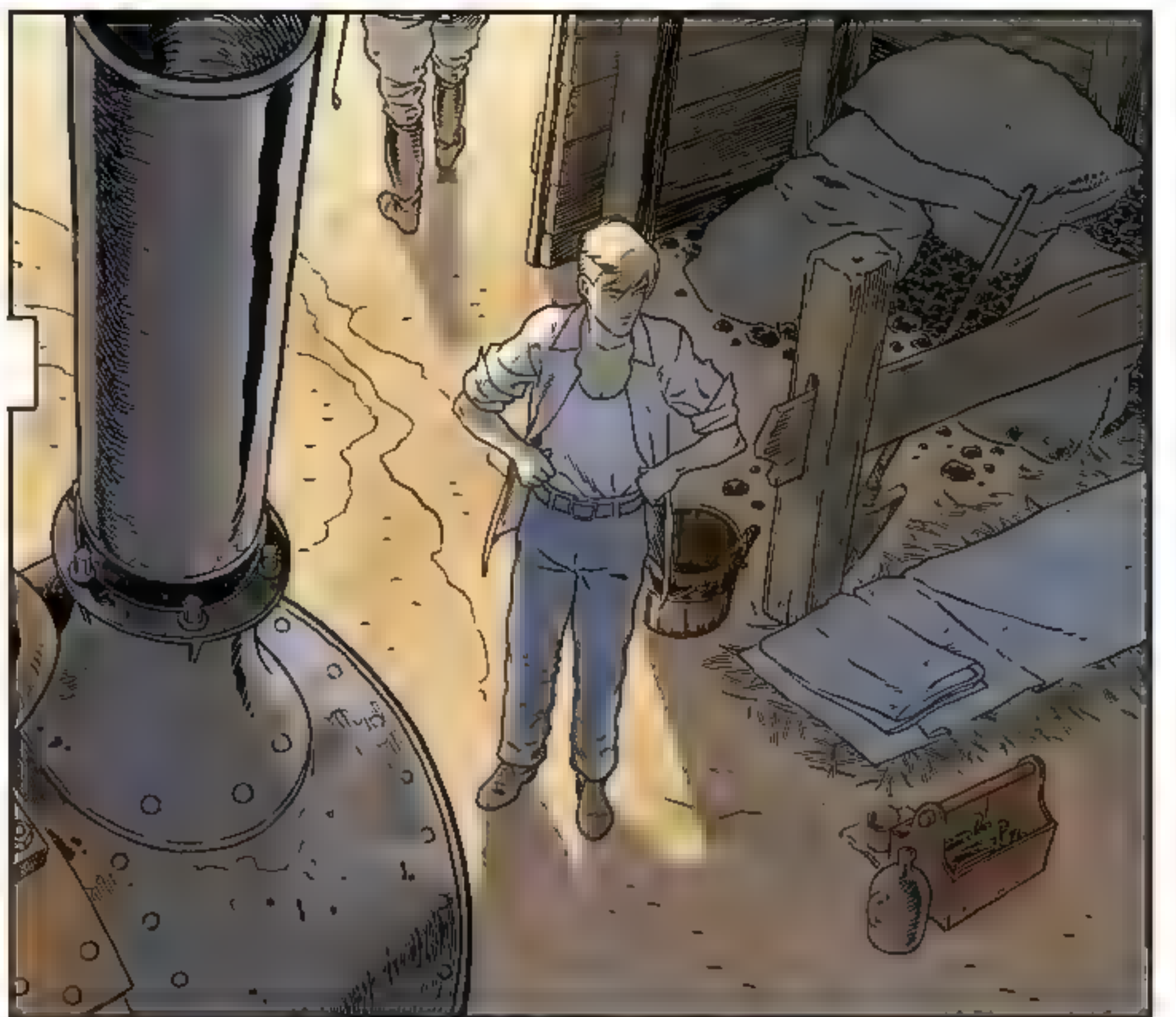
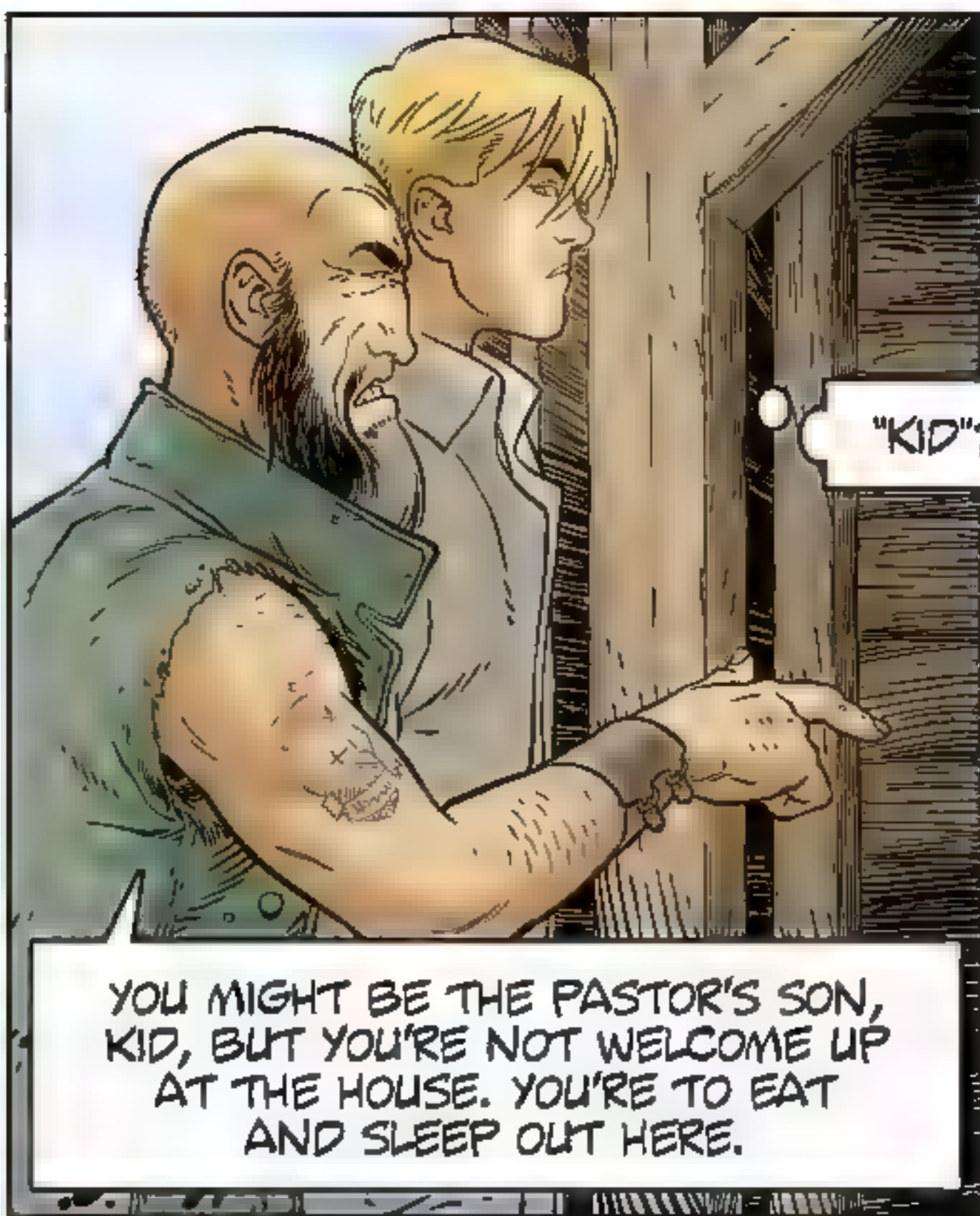
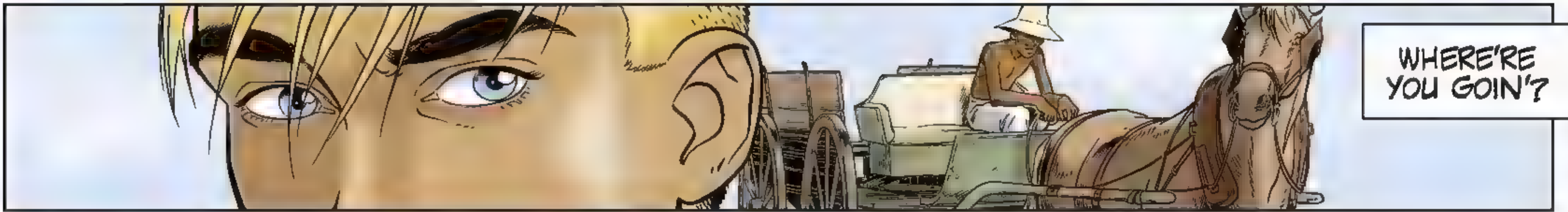
THE NEXT DAY, TRUE TO HIS WORD, MY FATHER TOOK ME BACK TO THE BECKERS'. HIS GOOD MOOD THAT DAY MADE ME REALIZE THAT TESTING KLAUS'S HUMILITY WAS JUST AS IMPORTANT TO HIM AS TESTING MY METTLE.

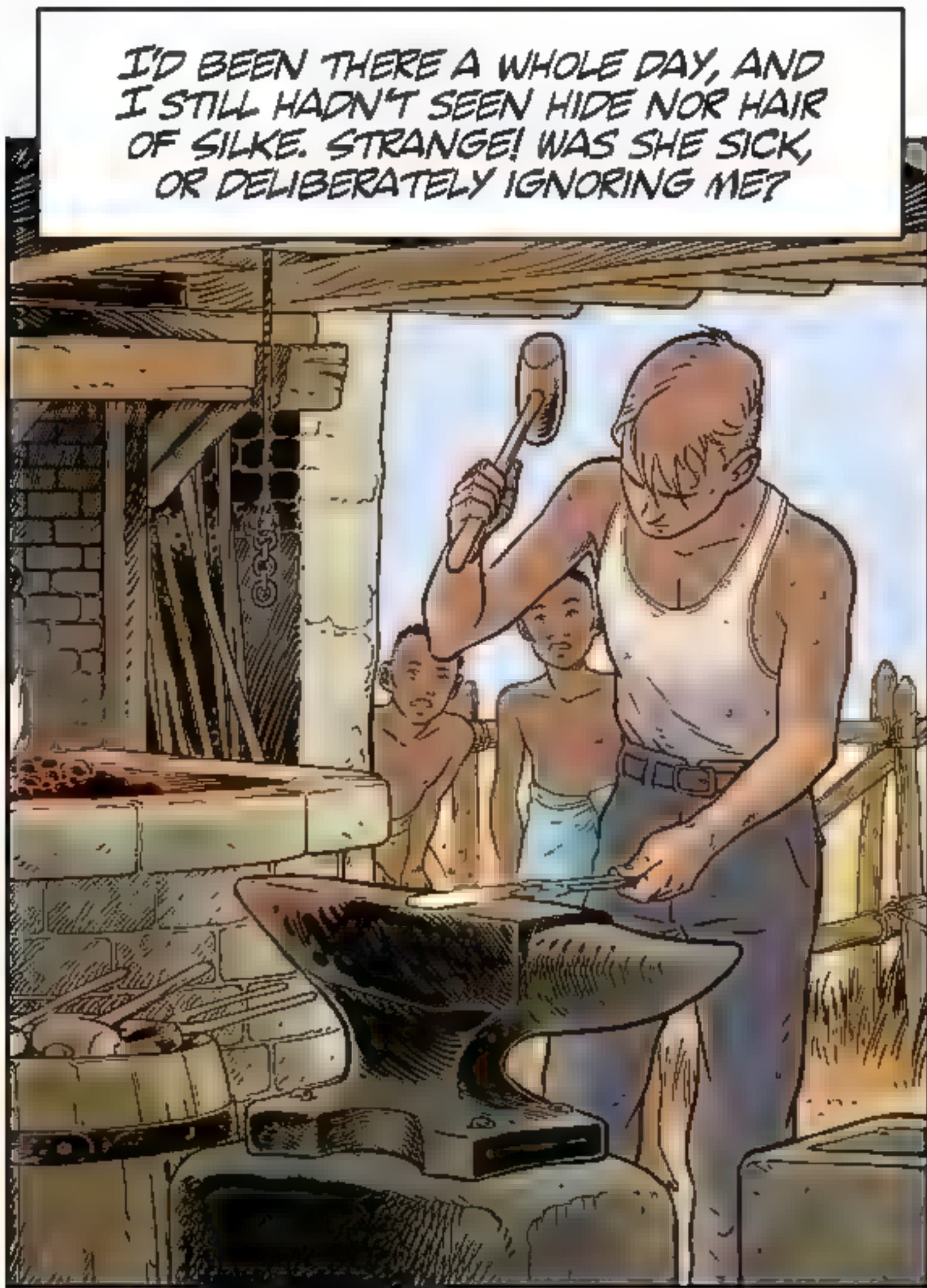


DEVOTED DOCTOR THAT HE WAS, HE MADE SURE TO CHECK ON HIS PATIENT.

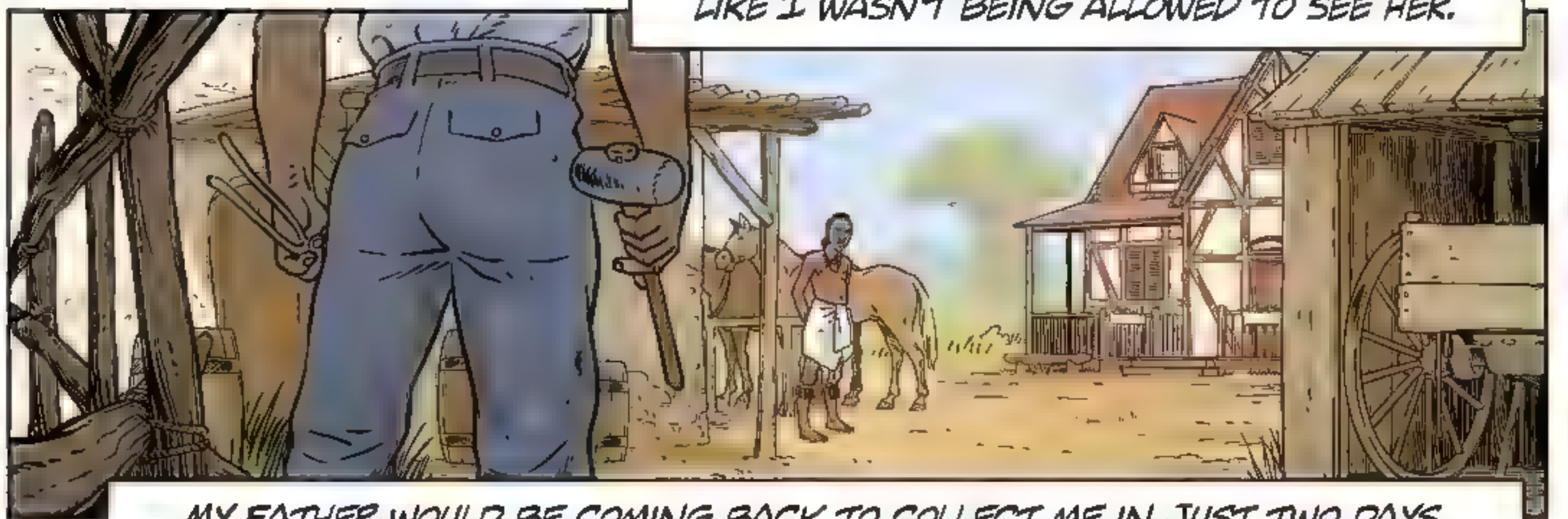
WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN UP TO, KLAUS? THE SPLINT'S LOOSE. THE BONE COULD HAVE REBROKEN!



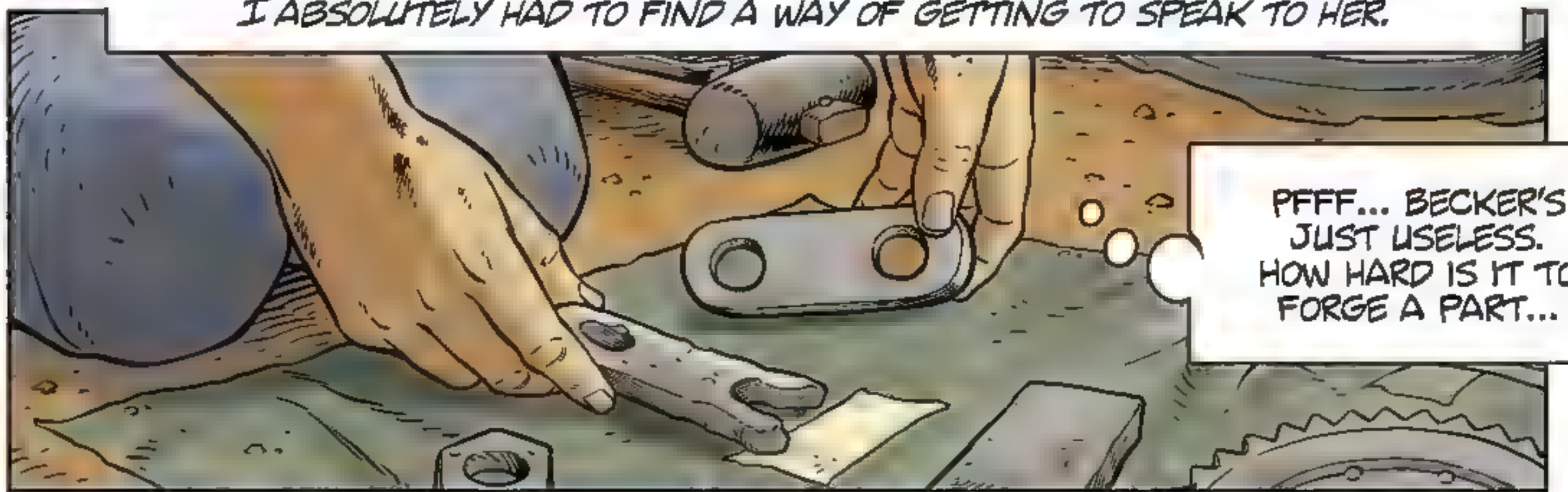




I'D BEEN THERE A WHOLE DAY, AND I STILL HADN'T SEEN HIDE NOR HAIR OF SILKE. STRANGE! WAS SHE SICK, OR DELIBERATELY IGNORING ME?

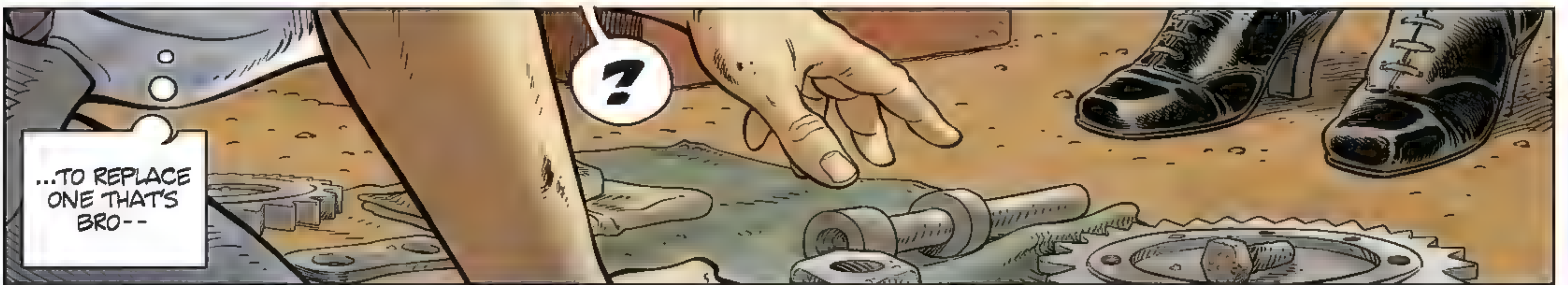


I COULDN'T BELIEVE THAT! IT SEEMED MORE LIKE I WASN'T BEING ALLOWED TO SEE HER.

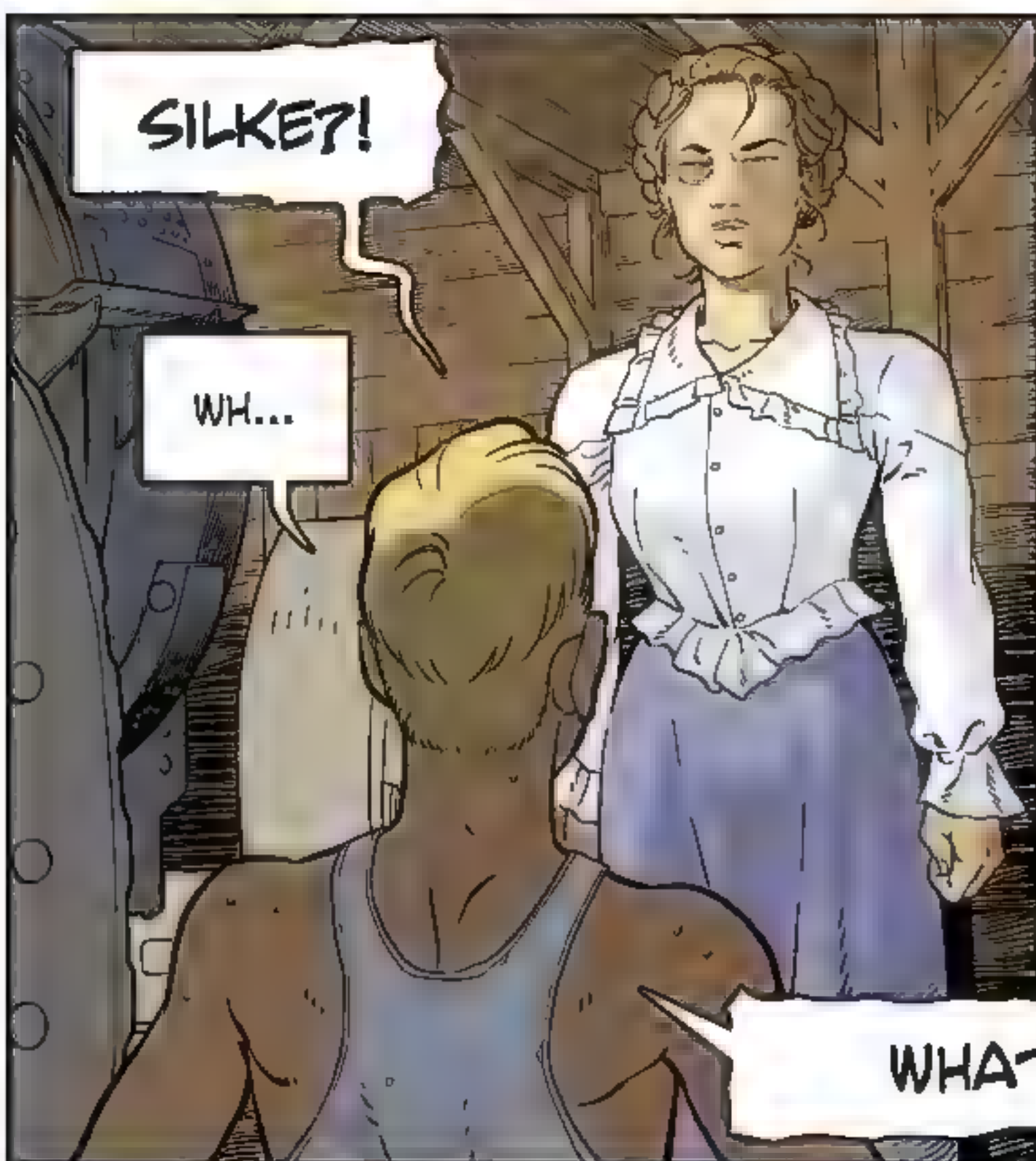


MY FATHER WOULD BE COMING BACK TO COLLECT ME IN JUST TWO DAYS. I ABSOLUTELY HAD TO FIND A WAY OF GETTING TO SPEAK TO HER.

PFFF... BECKER'S JUST USELESS. HOW HARD IS IT TO FORGE A PART...



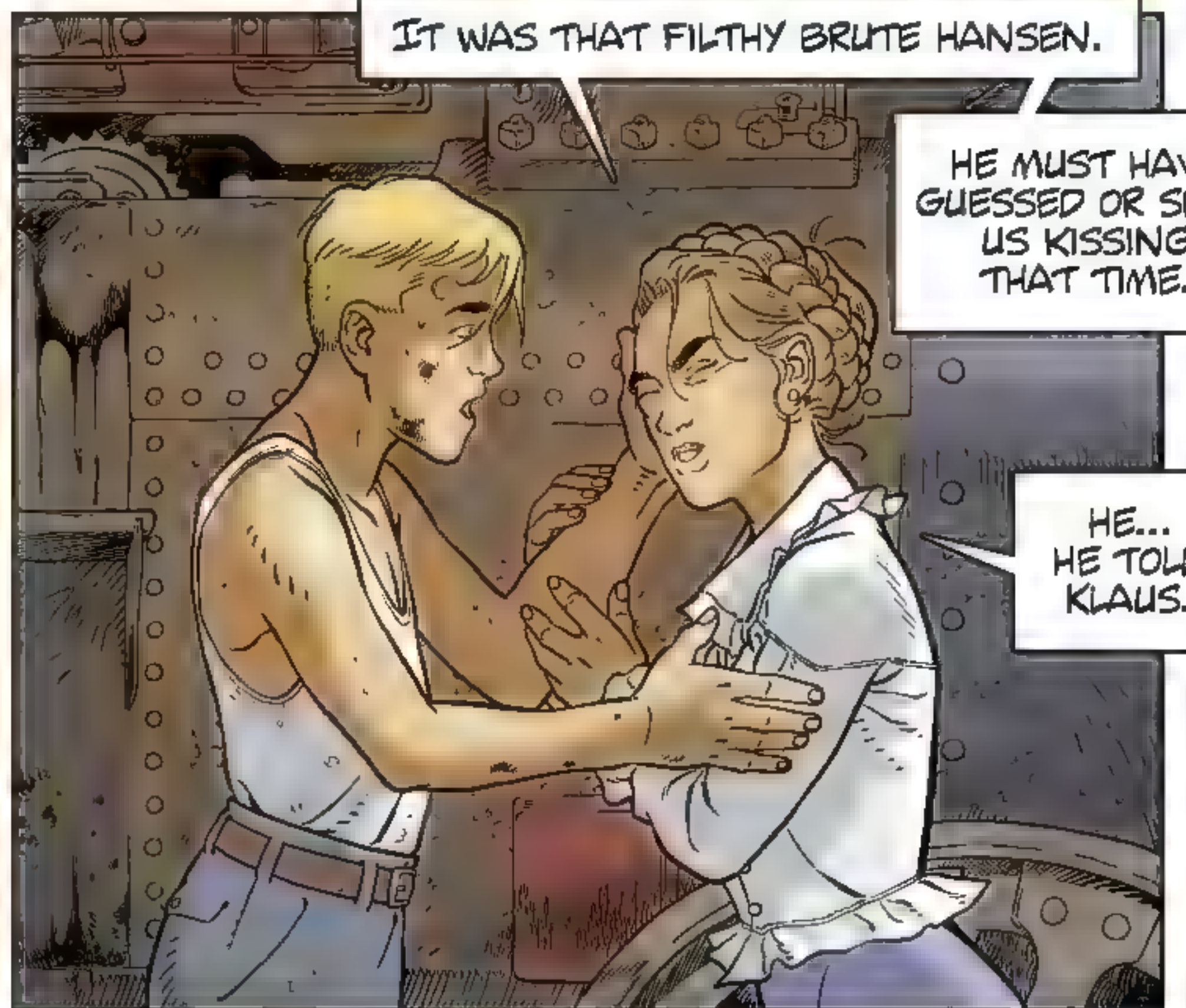
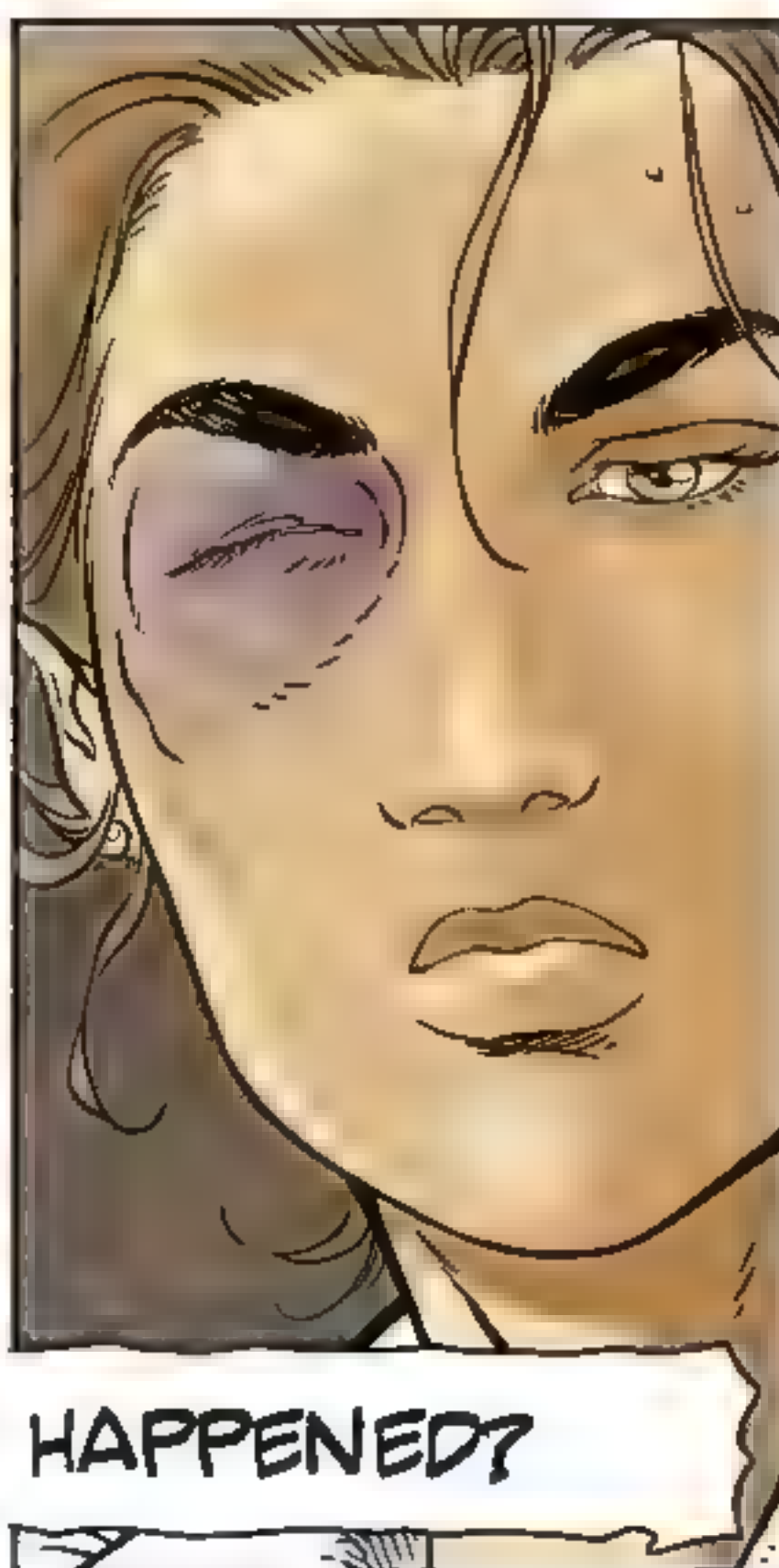
...TO REPLACE ONE THAT'S BRO--



SILKE?!

WH...

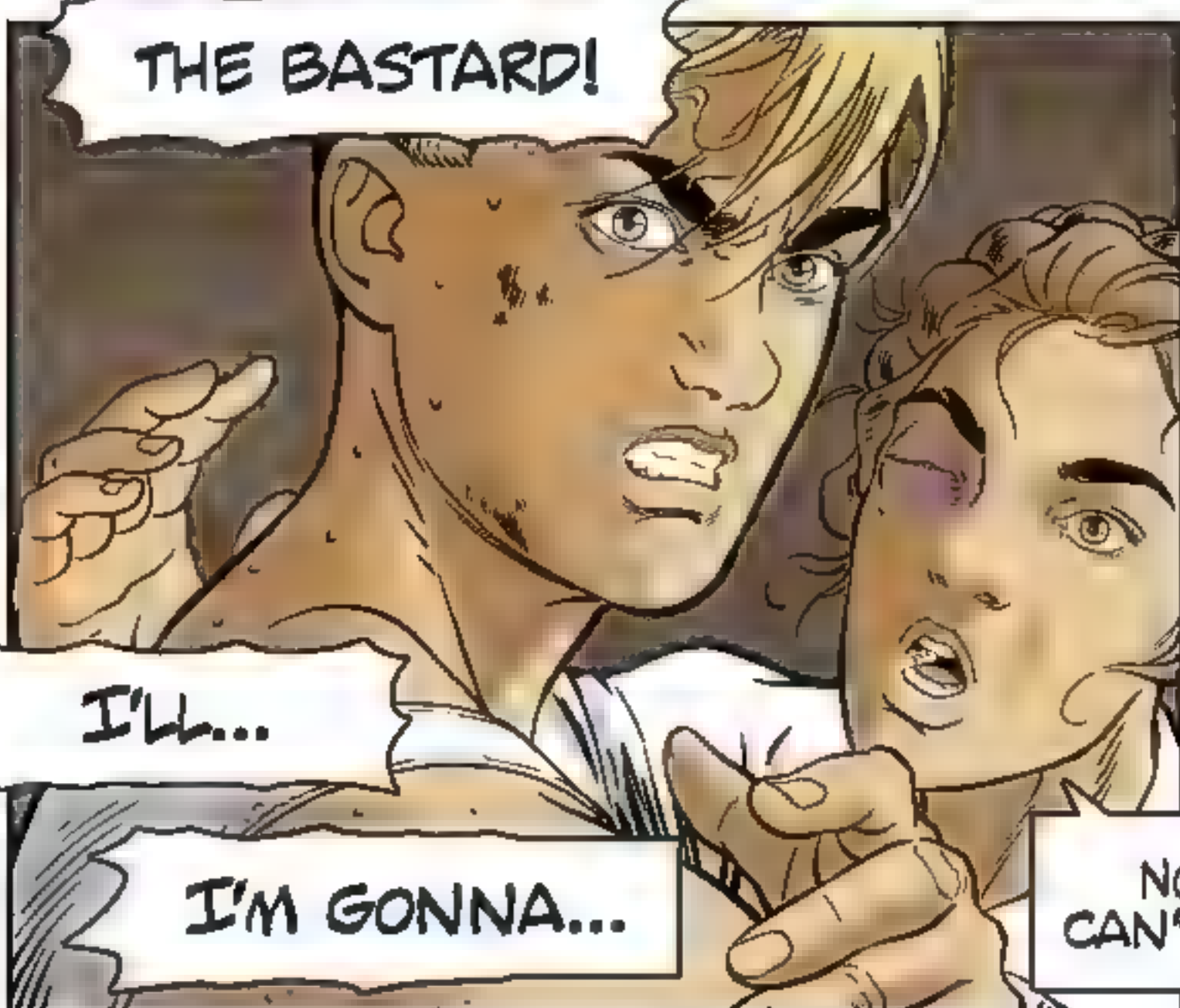
WHAT HAPPENED?



IT WAS THAT FILTHY BRUTE HANSEN.

HE MUST HAVE GUESSED OR SEEN US KISSING THAT TIME.

HE... HE TOLD KLAUS.

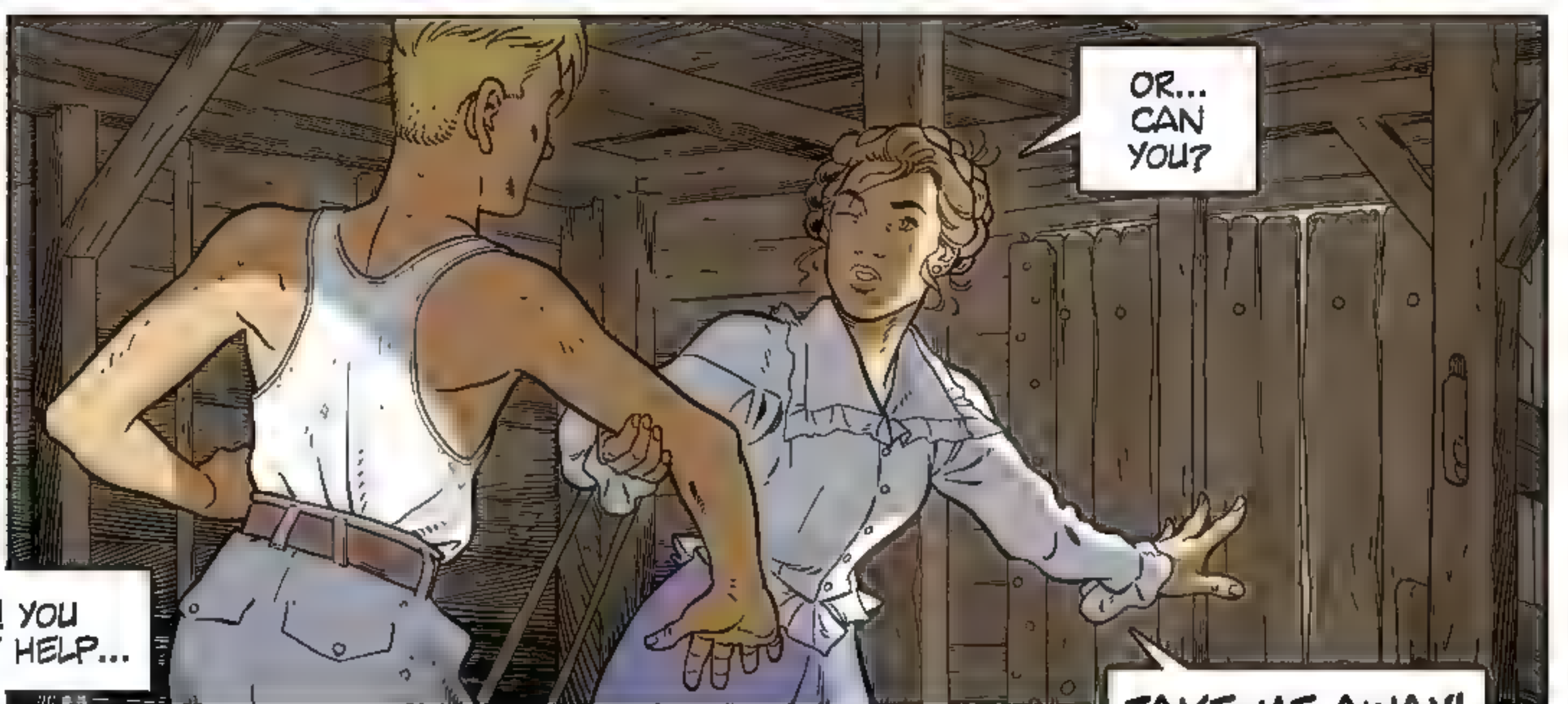


THE BASTARD!

I'LL...

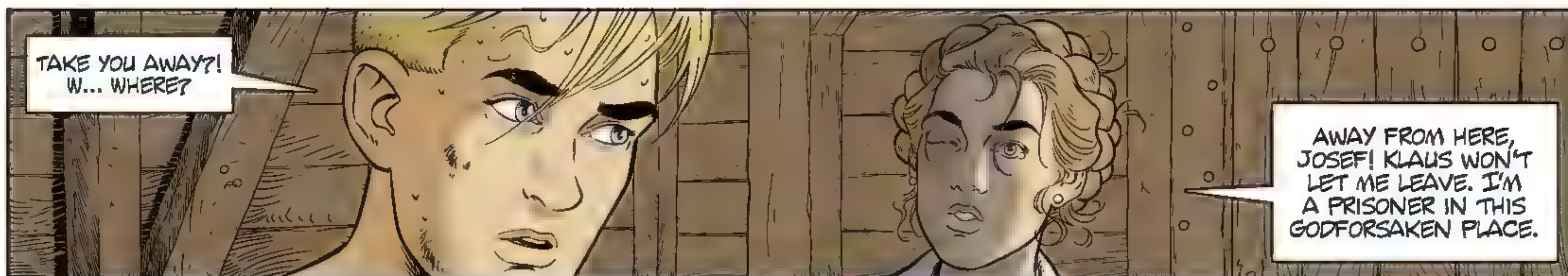
I'M GONNA...

NO! YOU CAN'T HELP...



OR... CAN YOU?

TAKE ME AWAY!



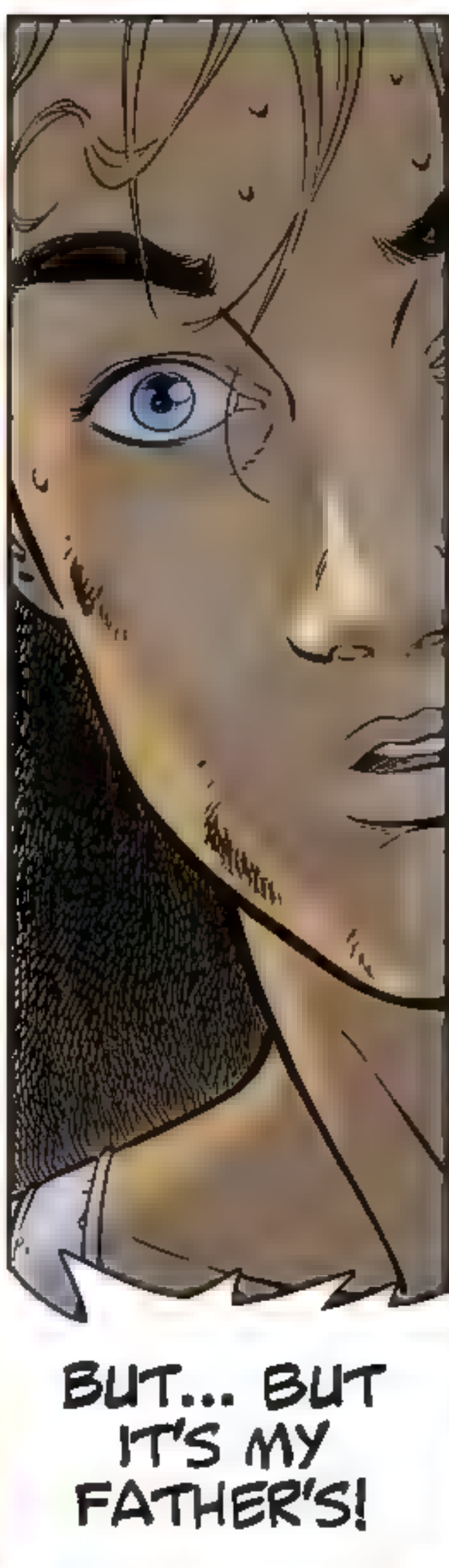
TAKE YOU AWAY?!
W... WHERE?

AWAY FROM HERE,
JOSEF! KLAUS WON'T
LET ME LEAVE. I'M
A PRISONER IN THIS
GODFORSAKEN PLACE.

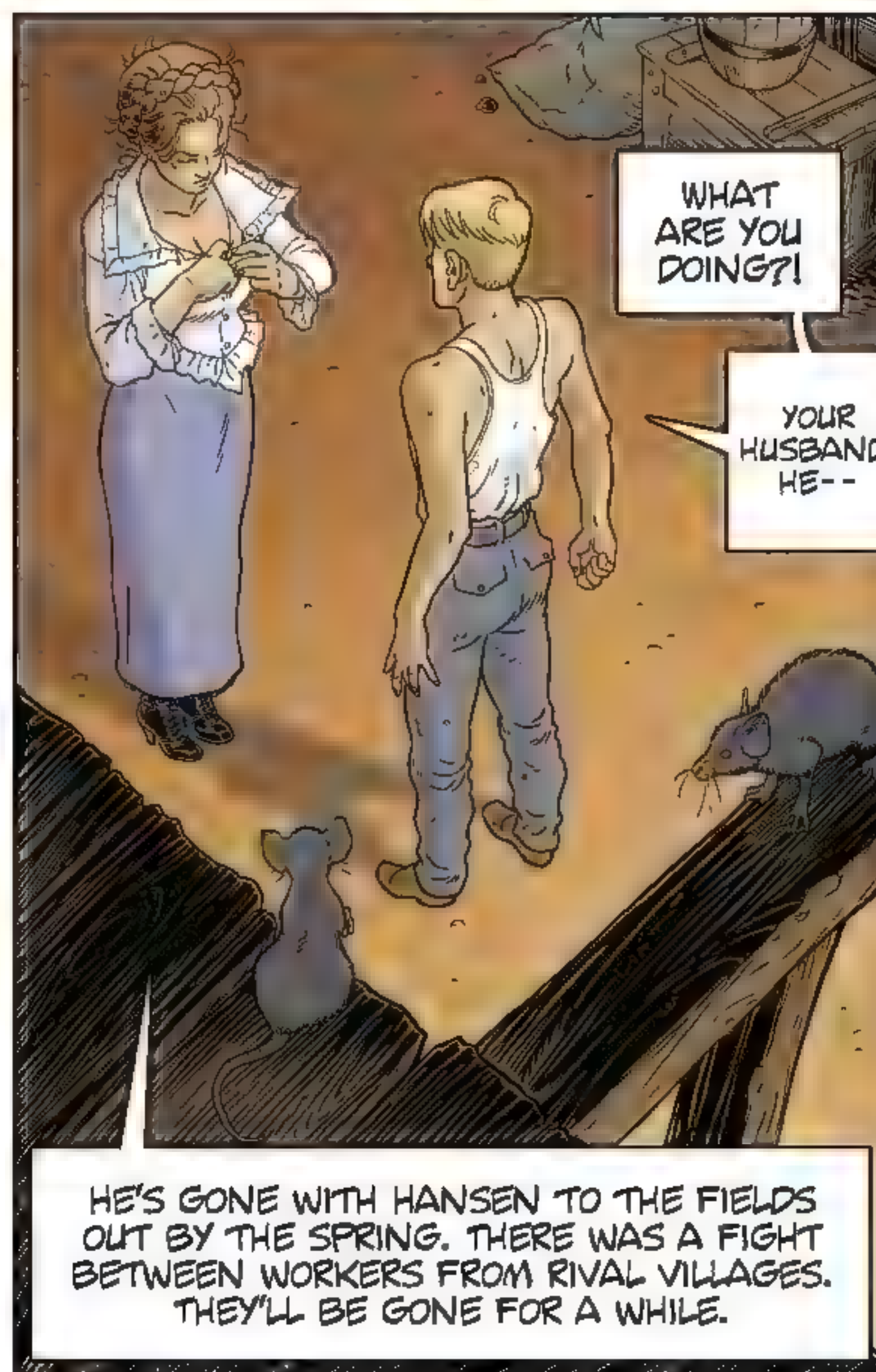
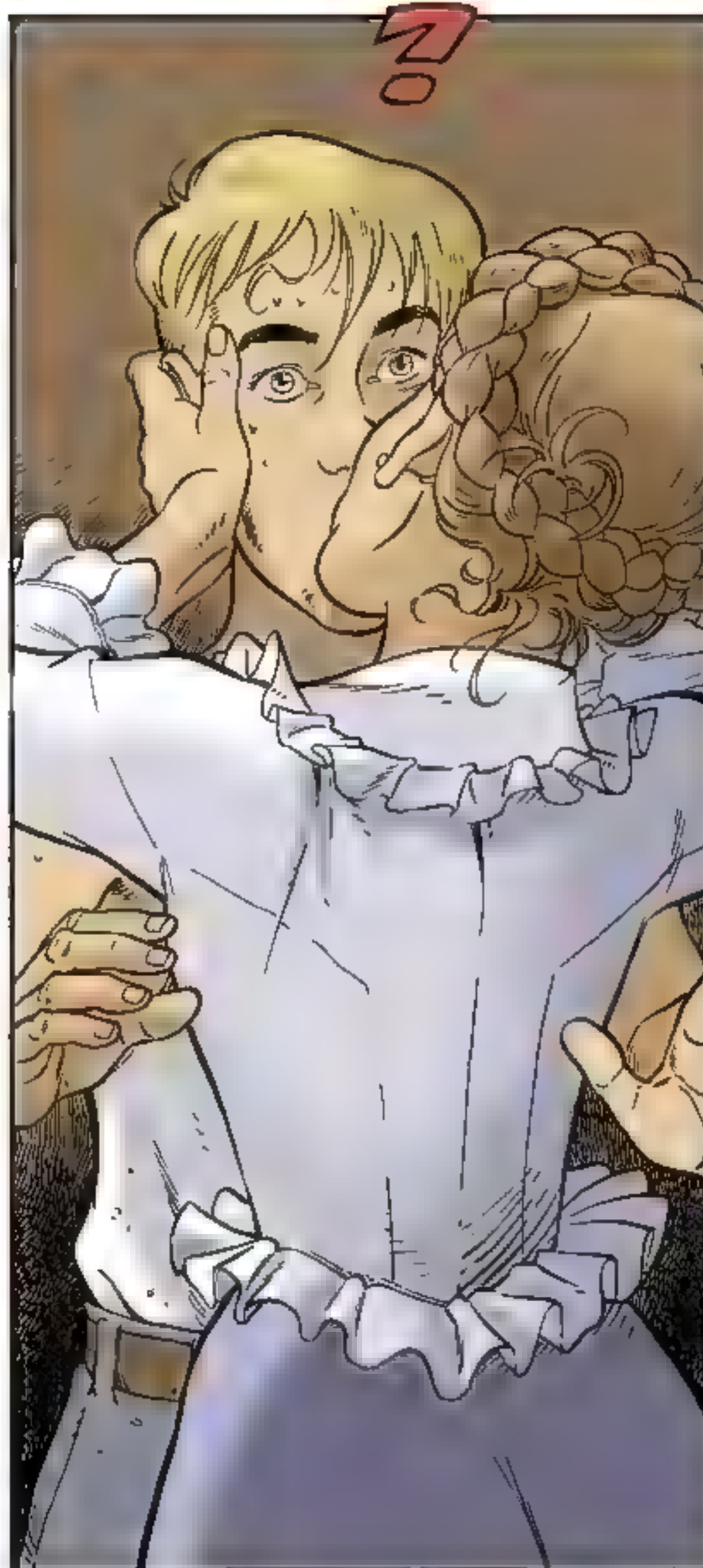


SET ME FREE! LET'S
RUN AWAY TO BRITISH
EAST AFRICA (1) IN
YOUR FLYING MACHINE!

THE AIRPLANE?



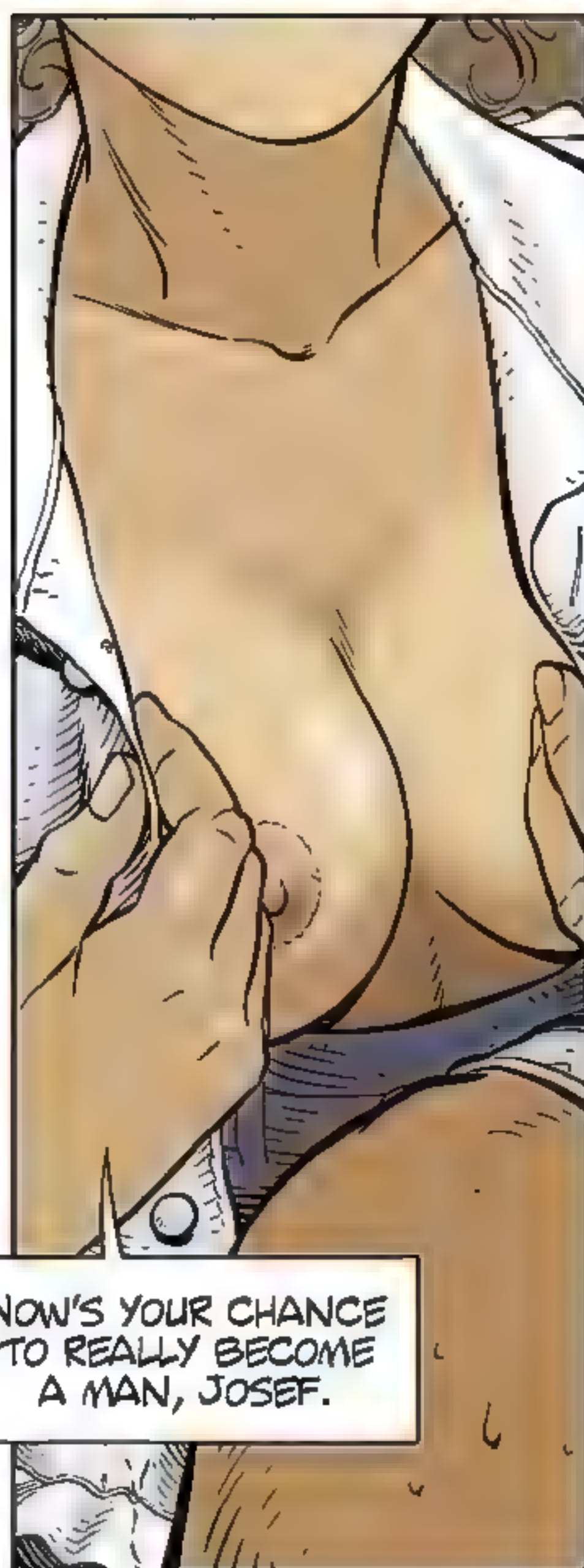
BUT... BUT
IT'S MY
FATHER'S!



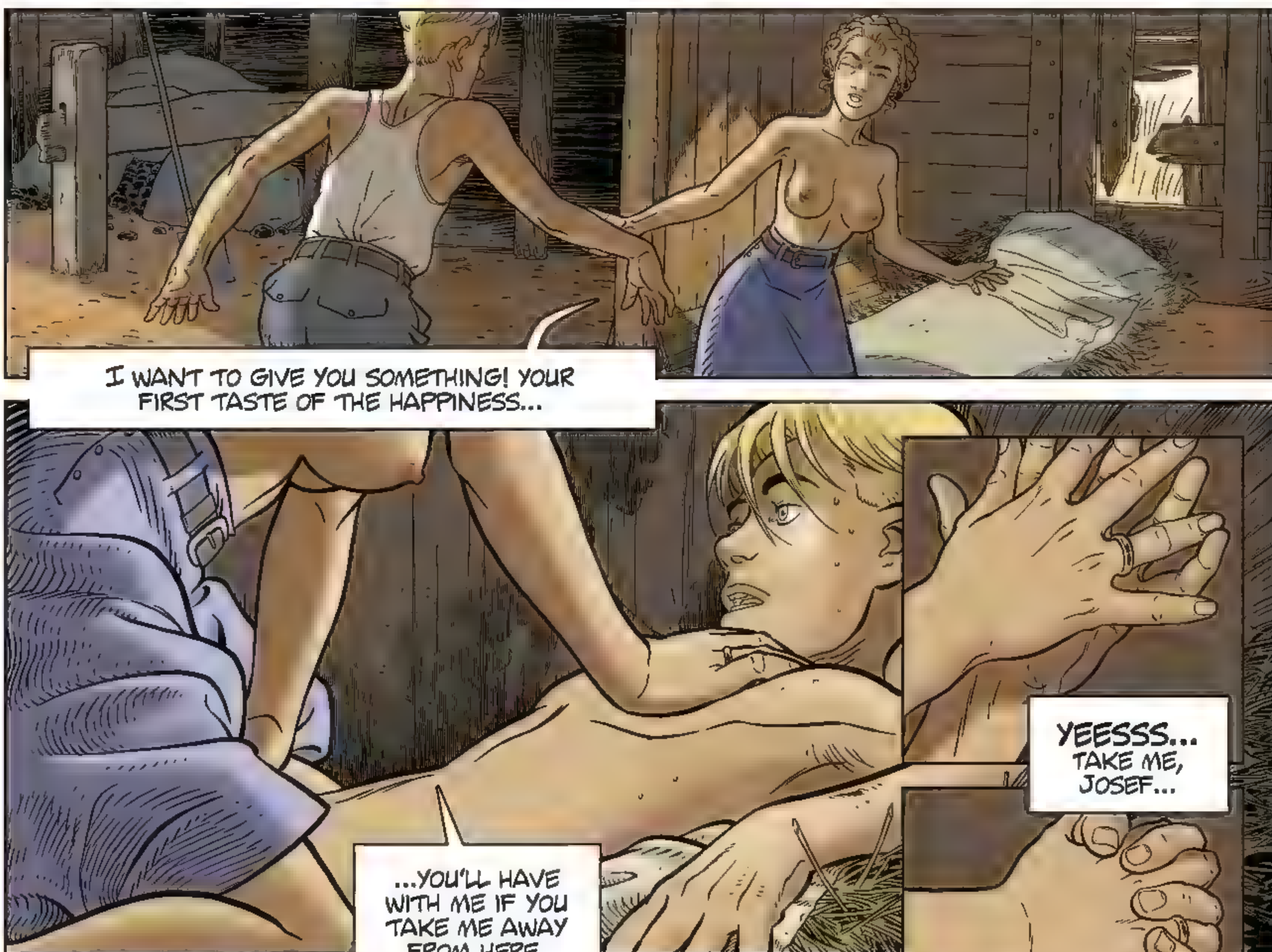
WHAT
ARE YOU
DOING?!

YOUR
HUSBAND,
HE--

HE'S GONE WITH HANSEN TO THE FIELDS
OUT BY THE SPRING. THERE WAS A FIGHT
BETWEEN WORKERS FROM RIVAL VILLAGES.
THEY'LL BE GONE FOR A WHILE.

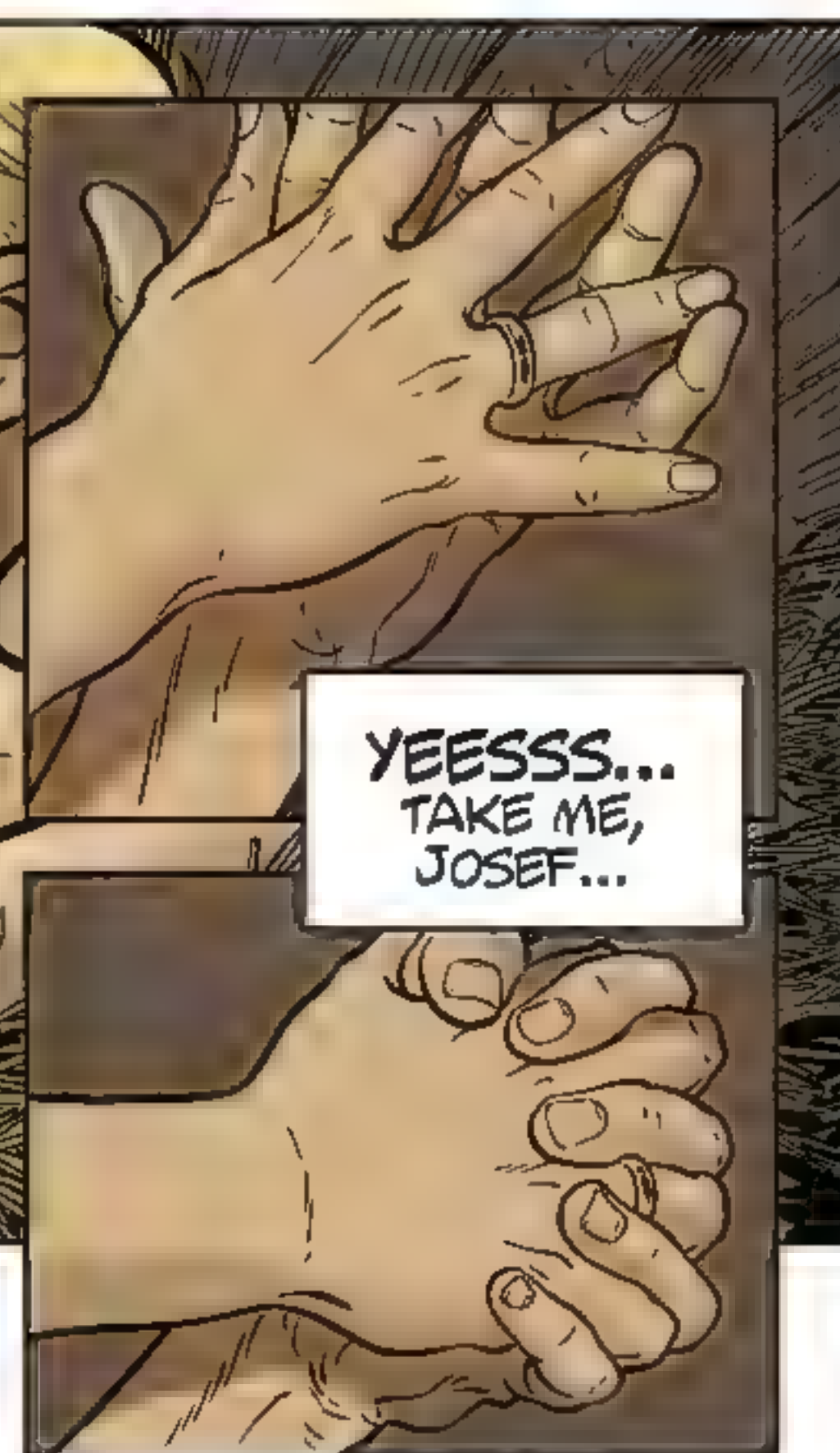


NOW'S YOUR CHANCE
TO REALLY BECOME
A MAN, JOSEF.



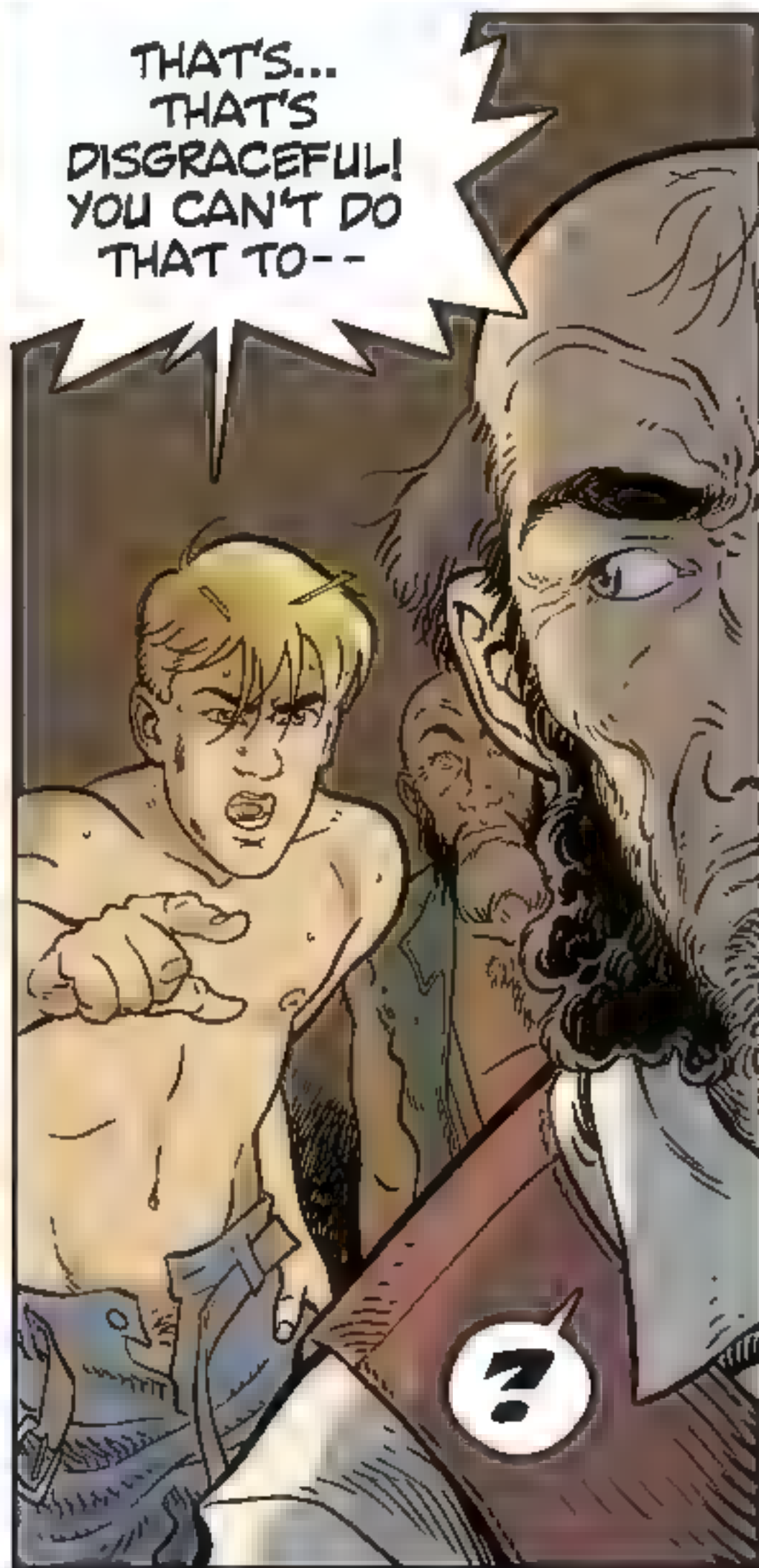
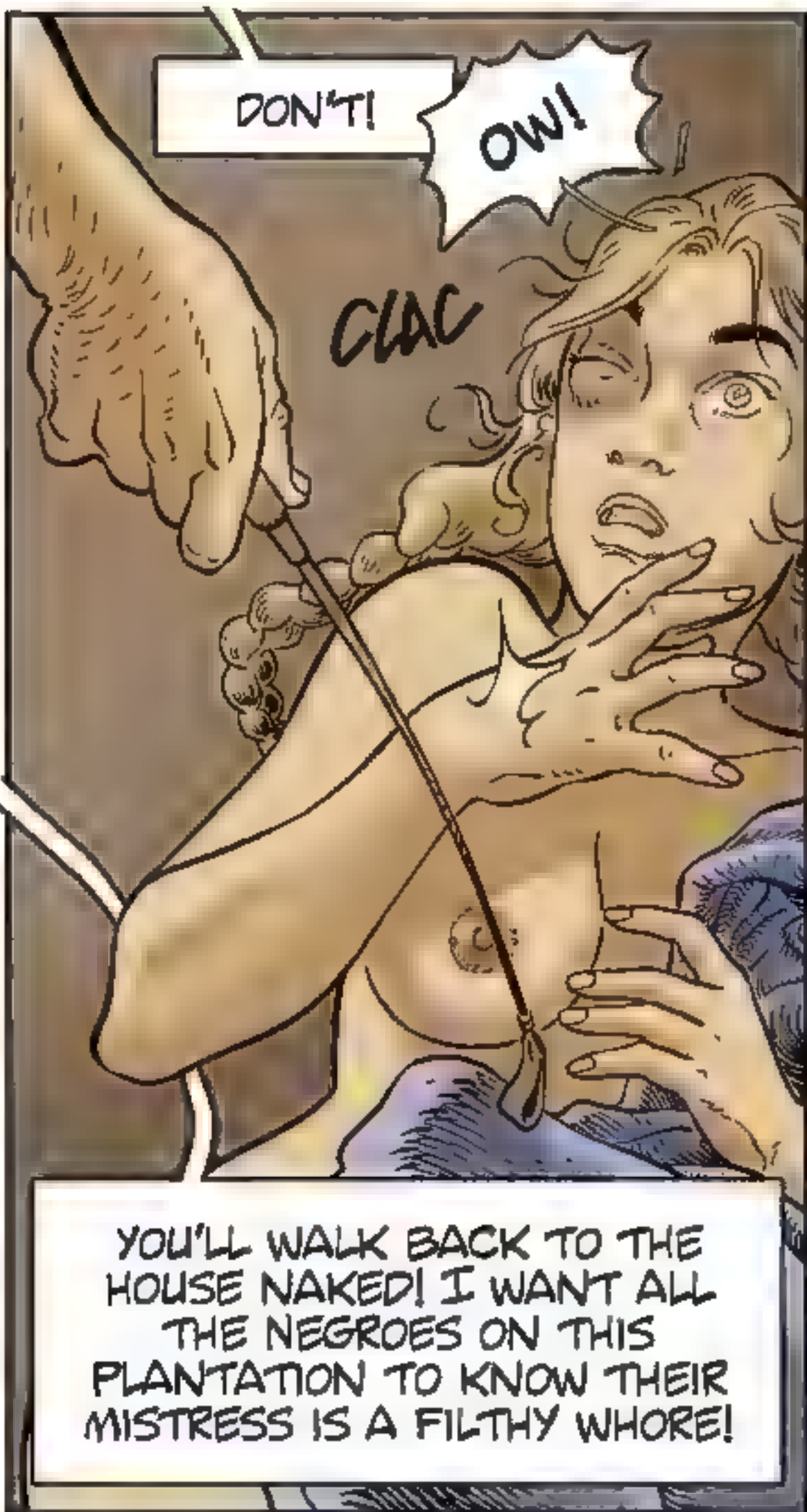
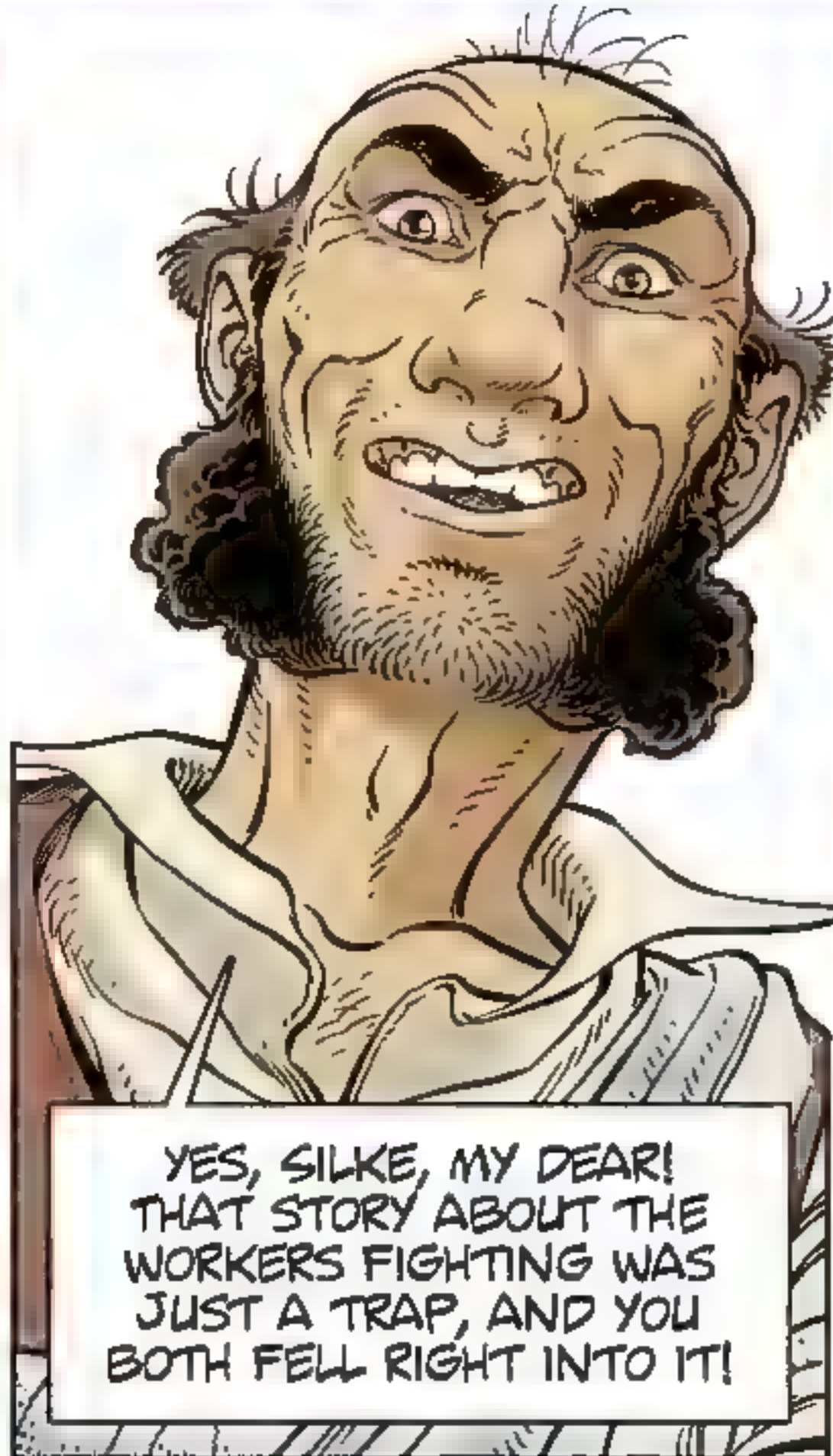
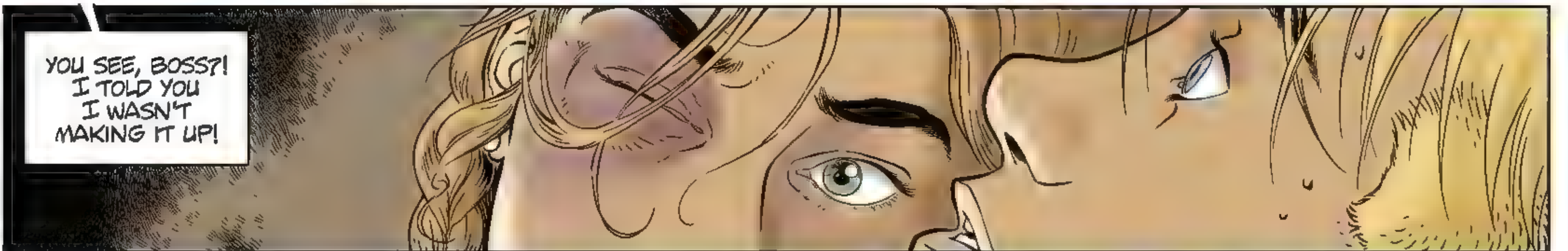
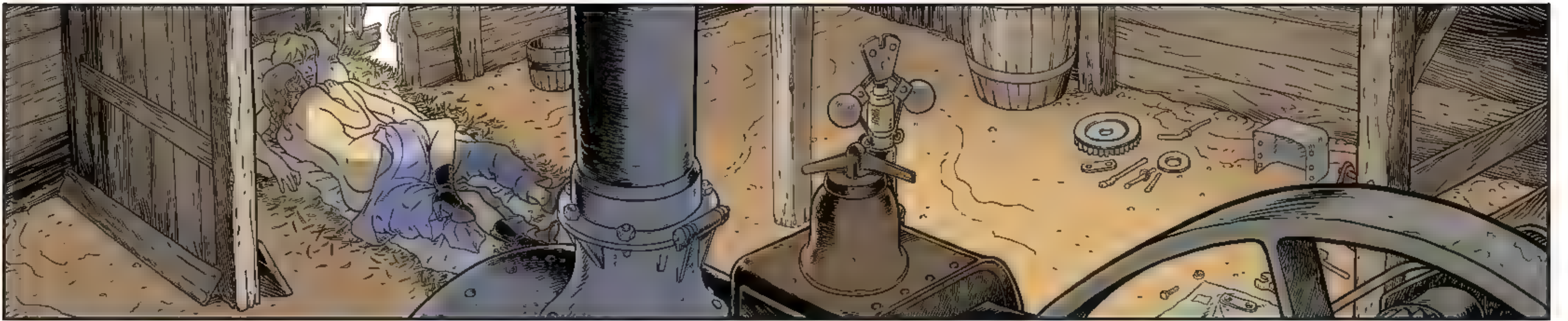
I WANT TO GIVE YOU SOMETHING! YOUR
FIRST TASTE OF THE HAPPINESS...

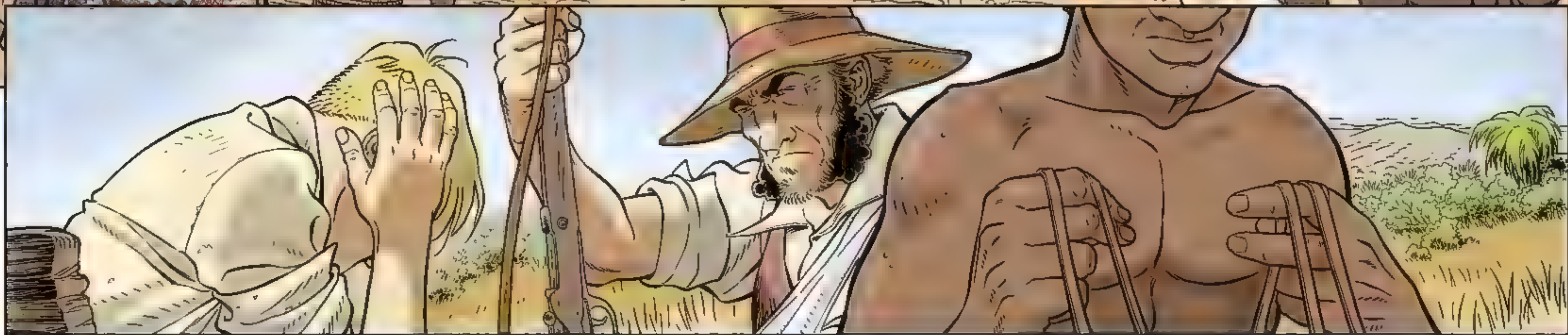
...YOU'LL HAVE
WITH ME IF YOU
TAKE ME AWAY
FROM HERE.



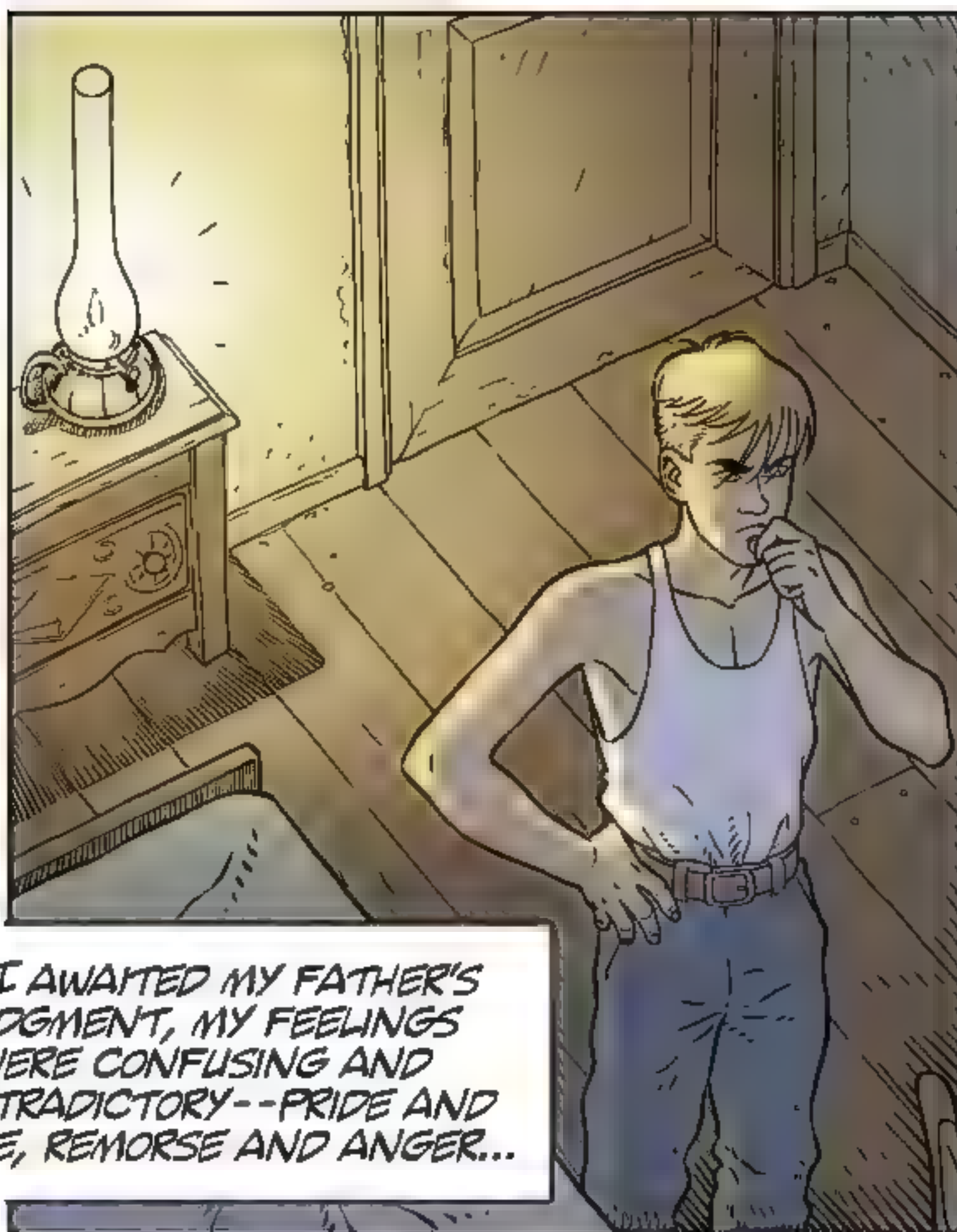
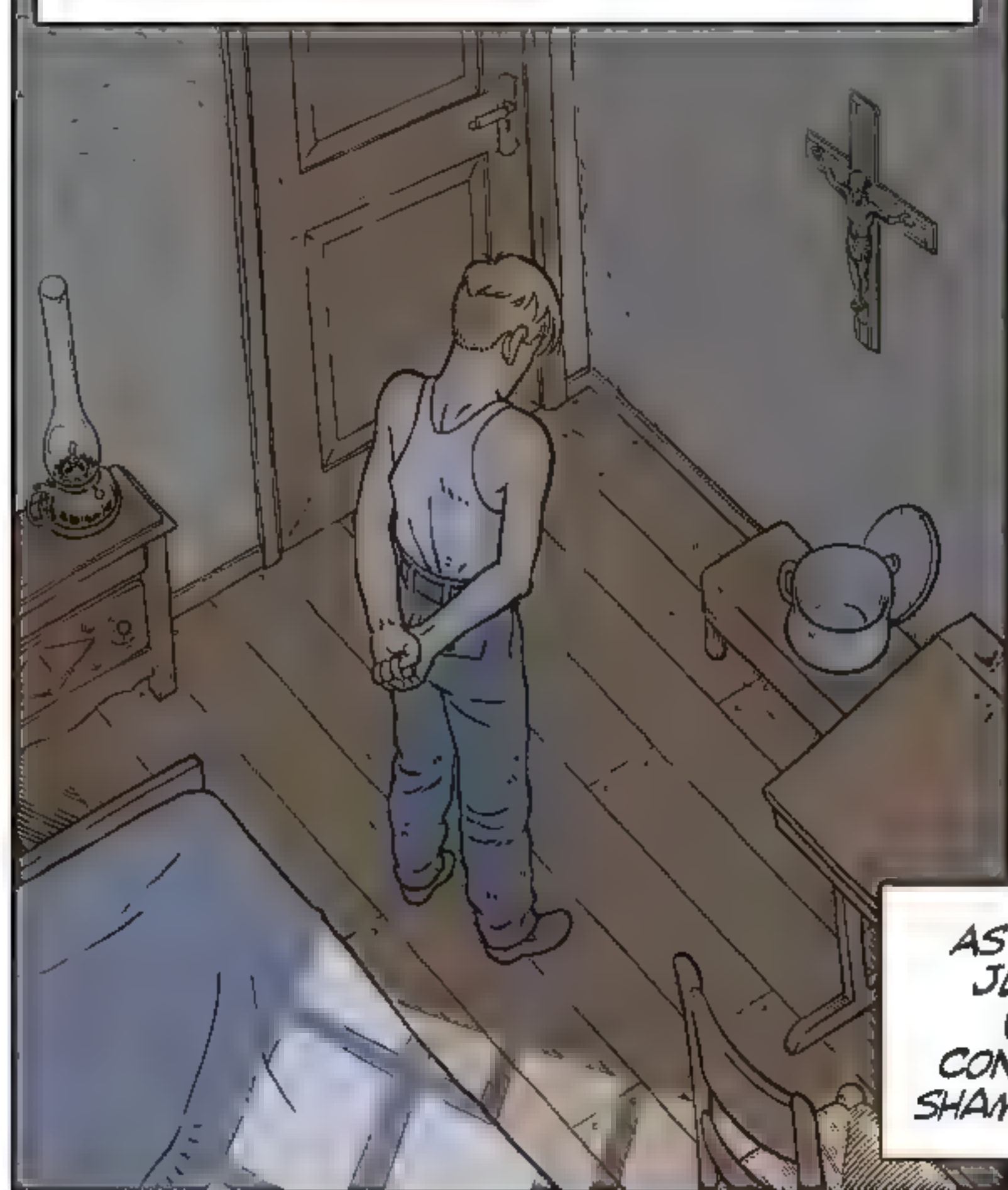
YEESSS...
TAKE ME,
JOSEF...

(1) A FORMER BRITISH COLONY, NOW KENYA.



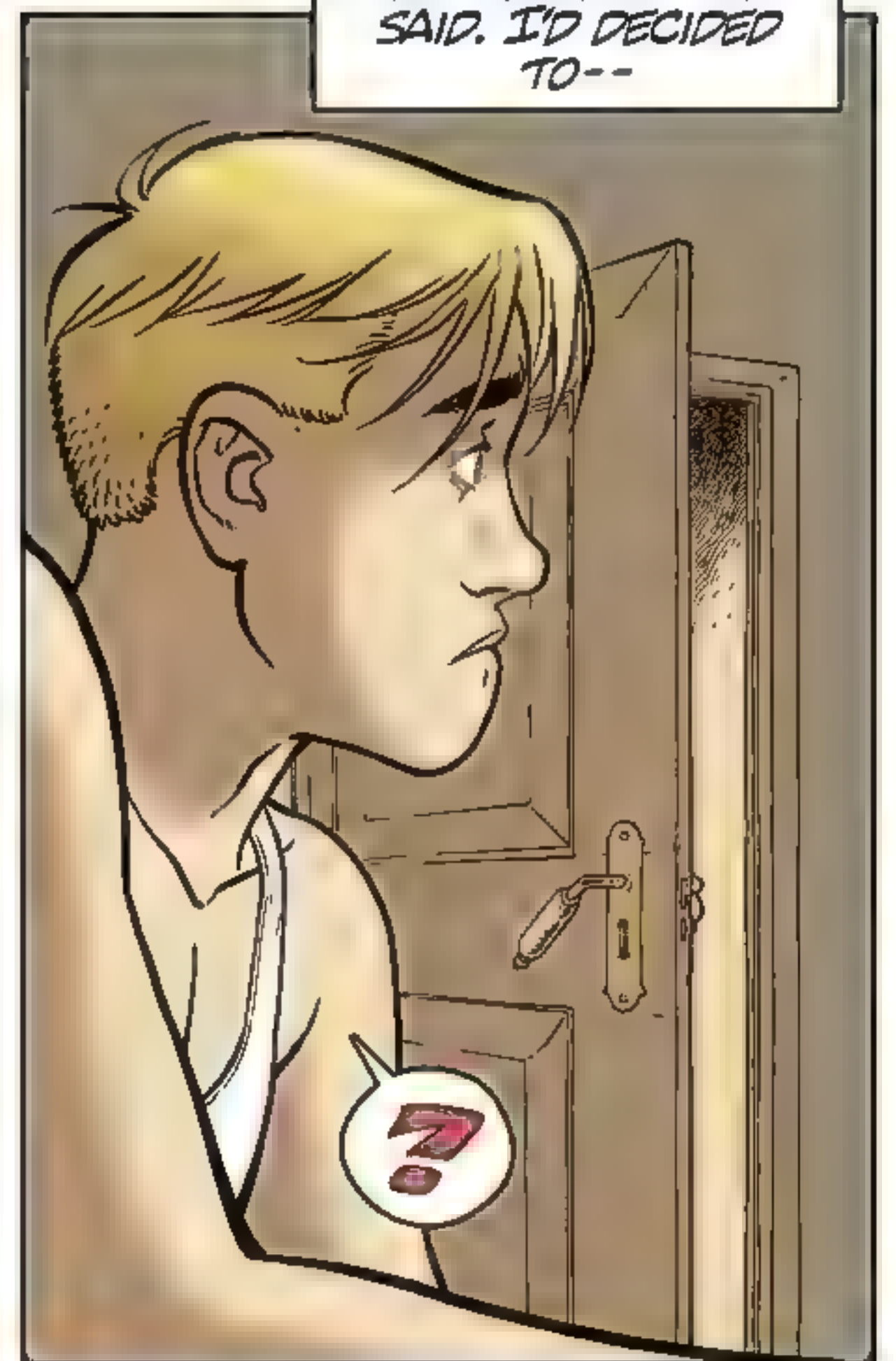


THE NEXT TWO DAYS WERE TORTURE.



AS I AWAITED MY FATHER'S JUDGMENT, MY FEELINGS WERE CONFUSING AND CONTRADICTION--PRIDE AND SHAME, REMORSE AND ANGER...

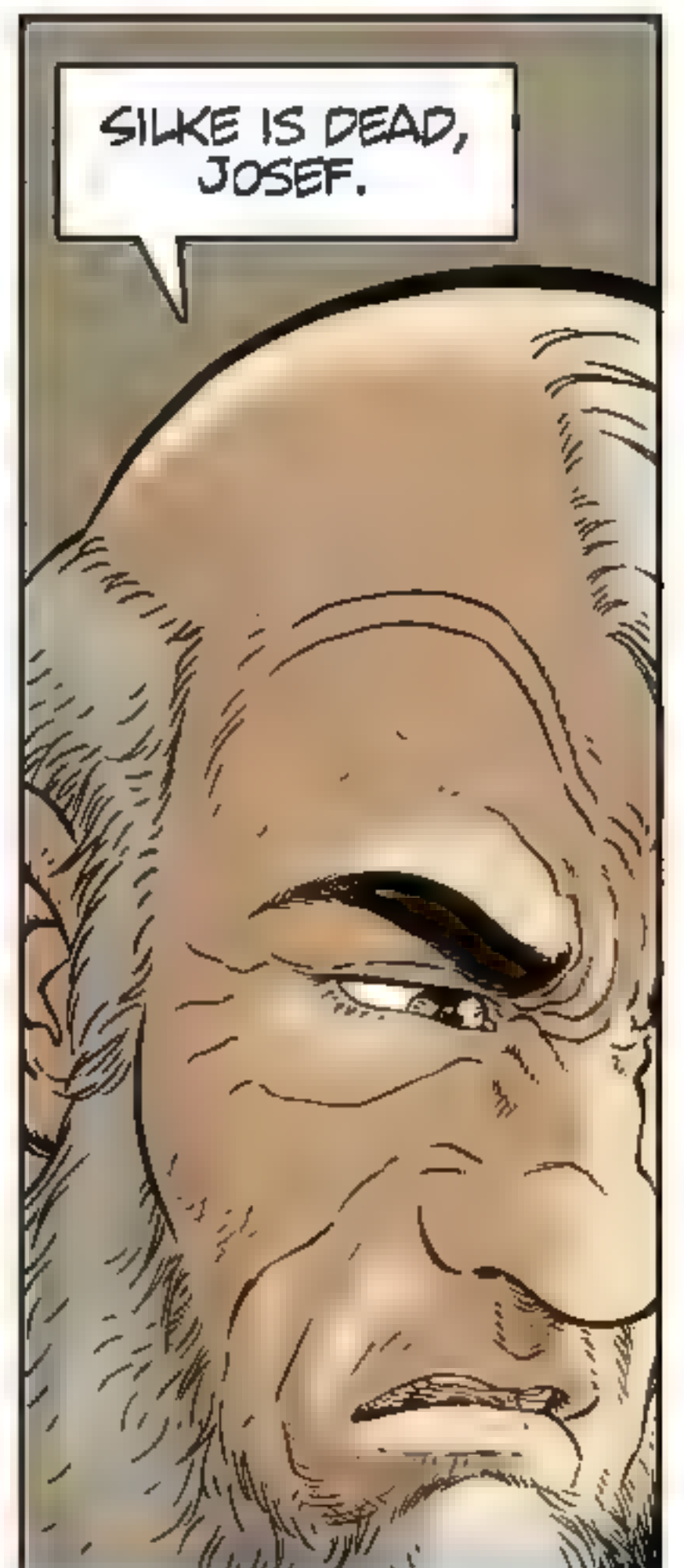
BUT IT DIDN'T MATTER WHAT HE SAID. I'D DECIDED TO--



JOSEF, I...

UH...

?

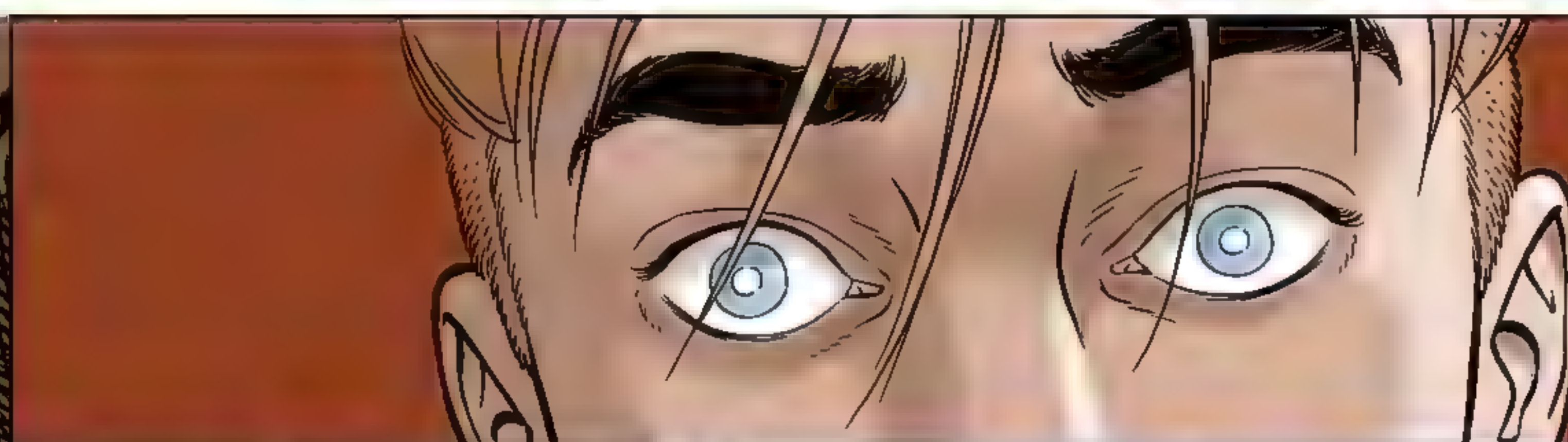


SILKE IS DEAD, JOSEF.

SHE KILLED HERSELF!

SHE KILLED HERSELF!

KILLED HERSELF!



...LET YOU OUT OF HERE FOR ONE HOUR A DAY...

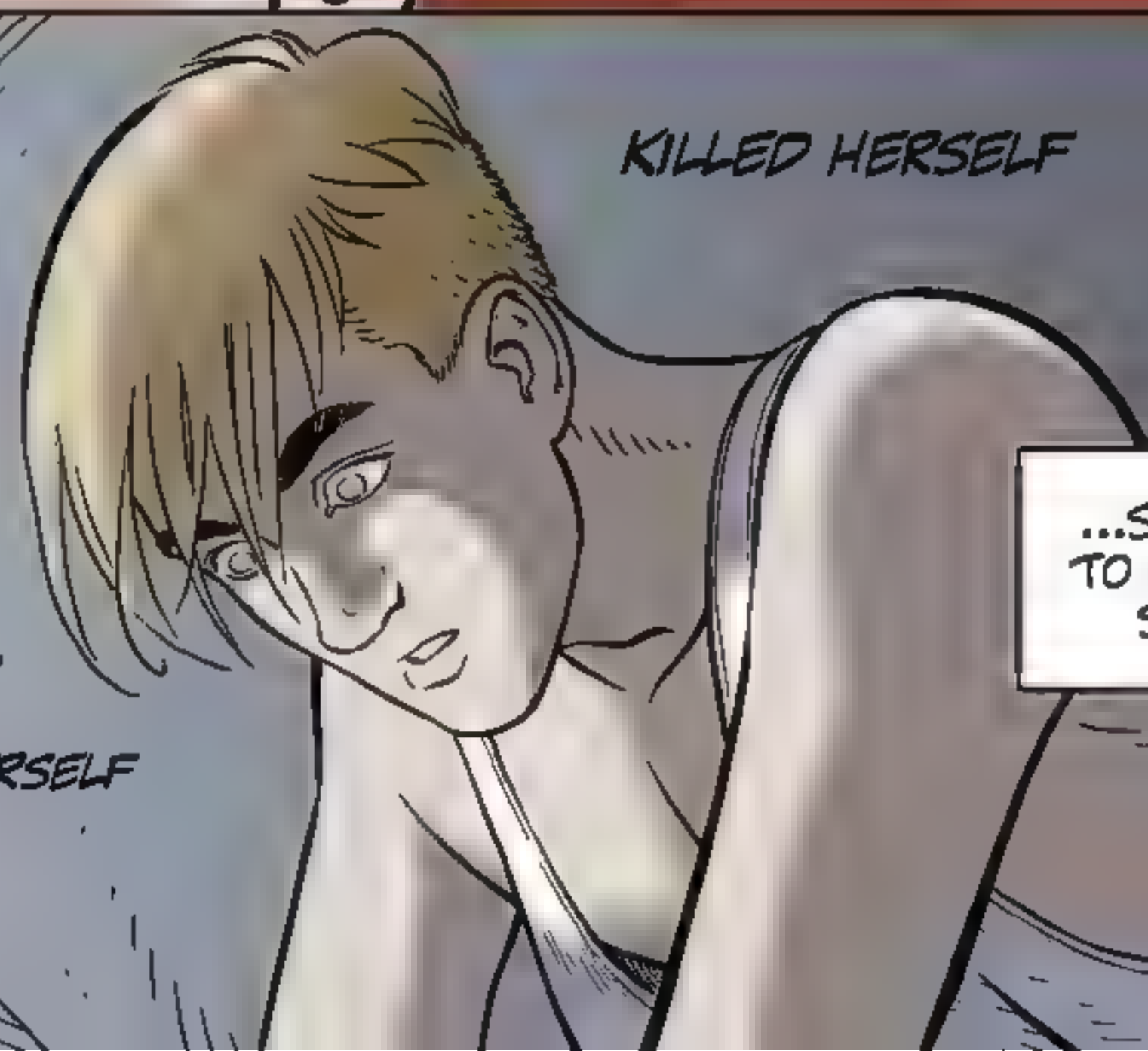
YOU MUST TAKE SOME OF THE BLAME FOR THIS TRAGEDY...

REPENT! PRAY FOR HER SOUL!

DEAD
HERSELF

KILLED HERSELF

...SENDING YOU TO GERMANY AS SOON AS...



AT FIRST, I
SUFFERED...

...TERRIBLE GRIEF!

SILKE WASHED OVER ME
LIKE A TIDAL WAVE,
DROWNING OUT ALL
OTHER FEELINGS.

JOSEF...

YOU MUST
EAT,
JOSEF!

THEN, LITTLE BY
LITTLE, SHE RETREATED,
LEAVING ME DRAINED
OF THE WILL TO LIVE.

TIME BECAME A
BOTTOMLESS PIT INTO
WHICH I LET MYSELF FALL
WITH A KIND OF MORBID
ACCEPTANCE.

IT WAS MY
MOTHER WHO
SAVED ME.

OR RATHER, THE HATRED
THAT THE POOR WOMAN
UNWITTINGLY AROUSED
IN MY HEART.

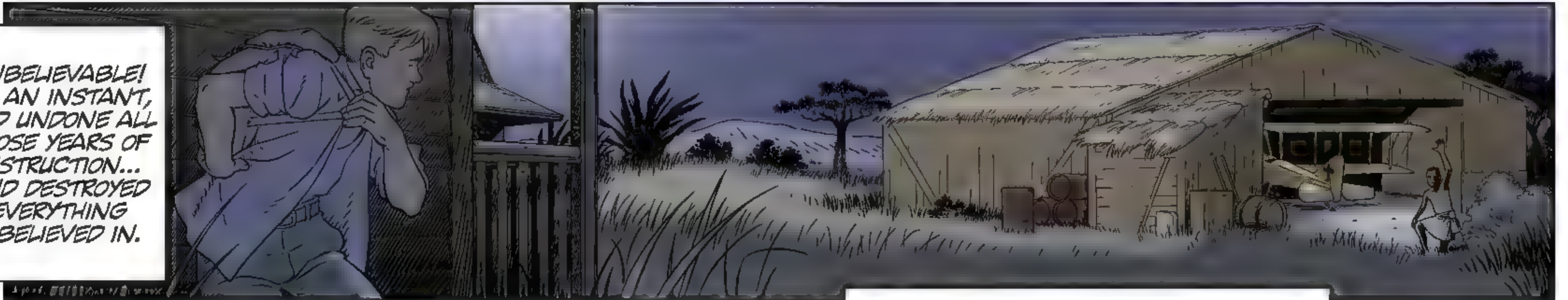
HATRED, A
PASSION THAT
SO OFTEN
DESTROYS
LIVES...

...GAVE
MINE A NEW
PURPOSE!

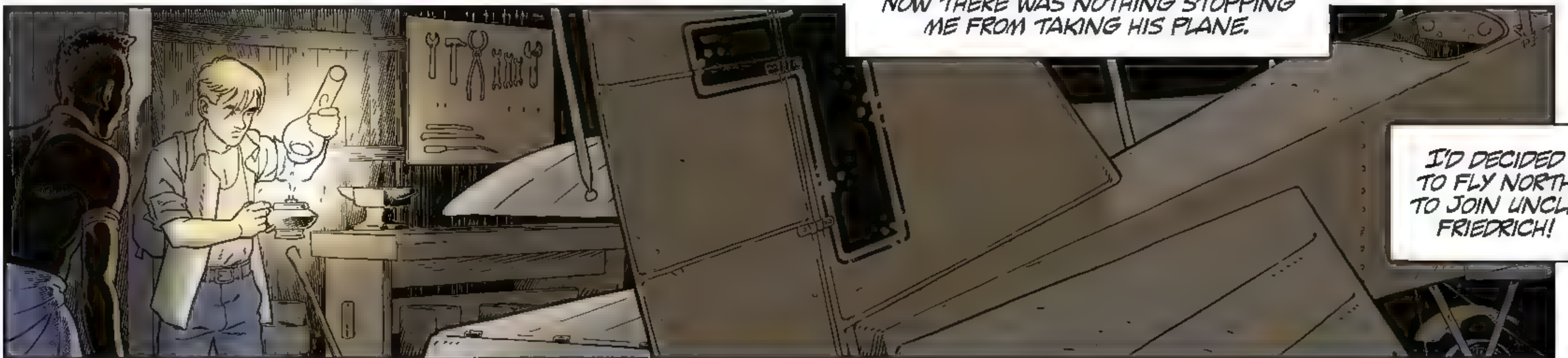
MY FATHER HAD LIED TO ME! BETRAYED ME! MY FATHER! A PASTOR!



UNBELIEVABLE!
IN AN INSTANT,
HE'D UNDONE ALL
THOSE YEARS OF
INSTRUCTION...
AND DESTROYED
EVERYTHING
I BELIEVED IN.

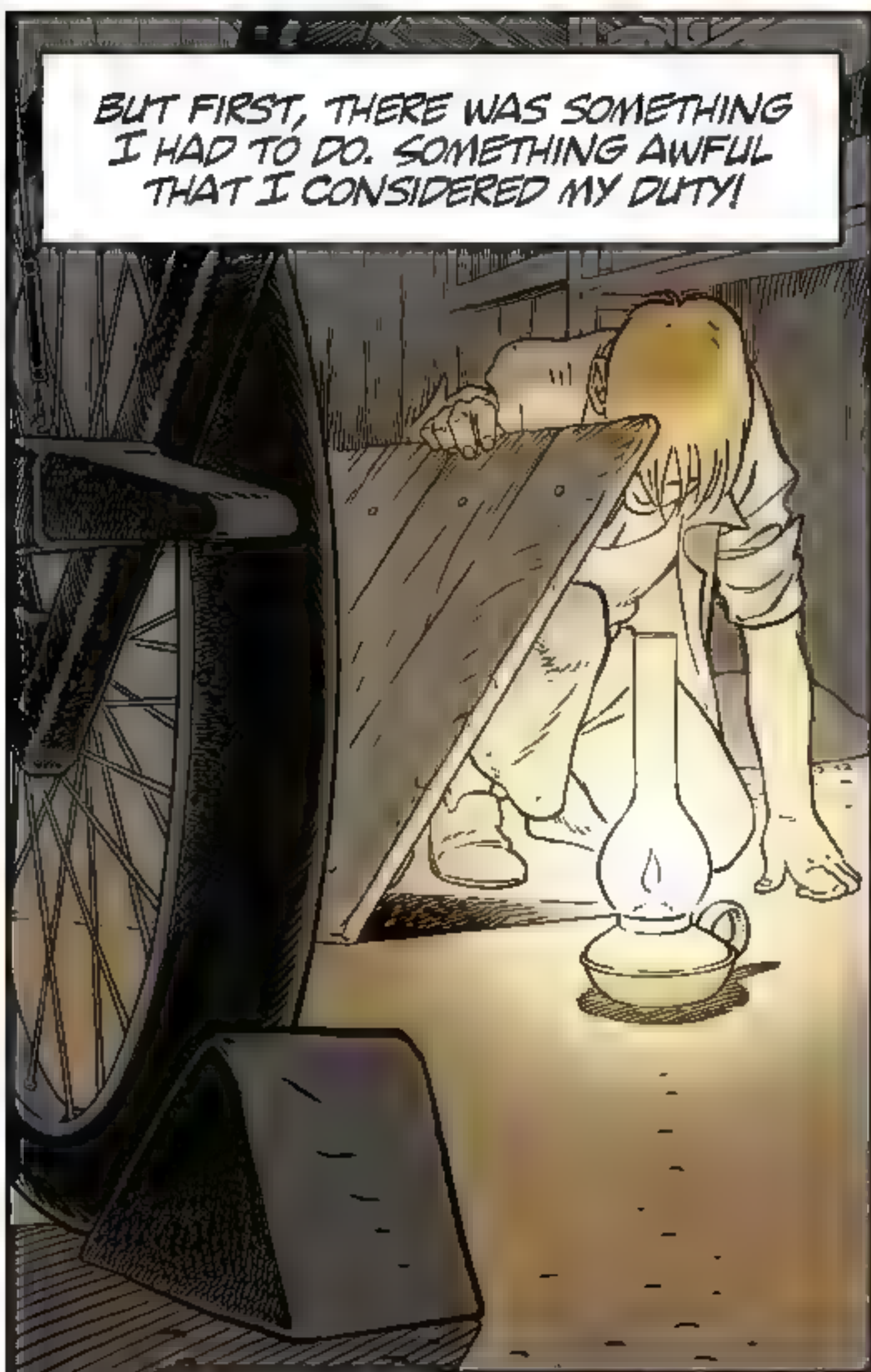


NOW THERE WAS NOTHING STOPPING
ME FROM TAKING HIS PLANE.



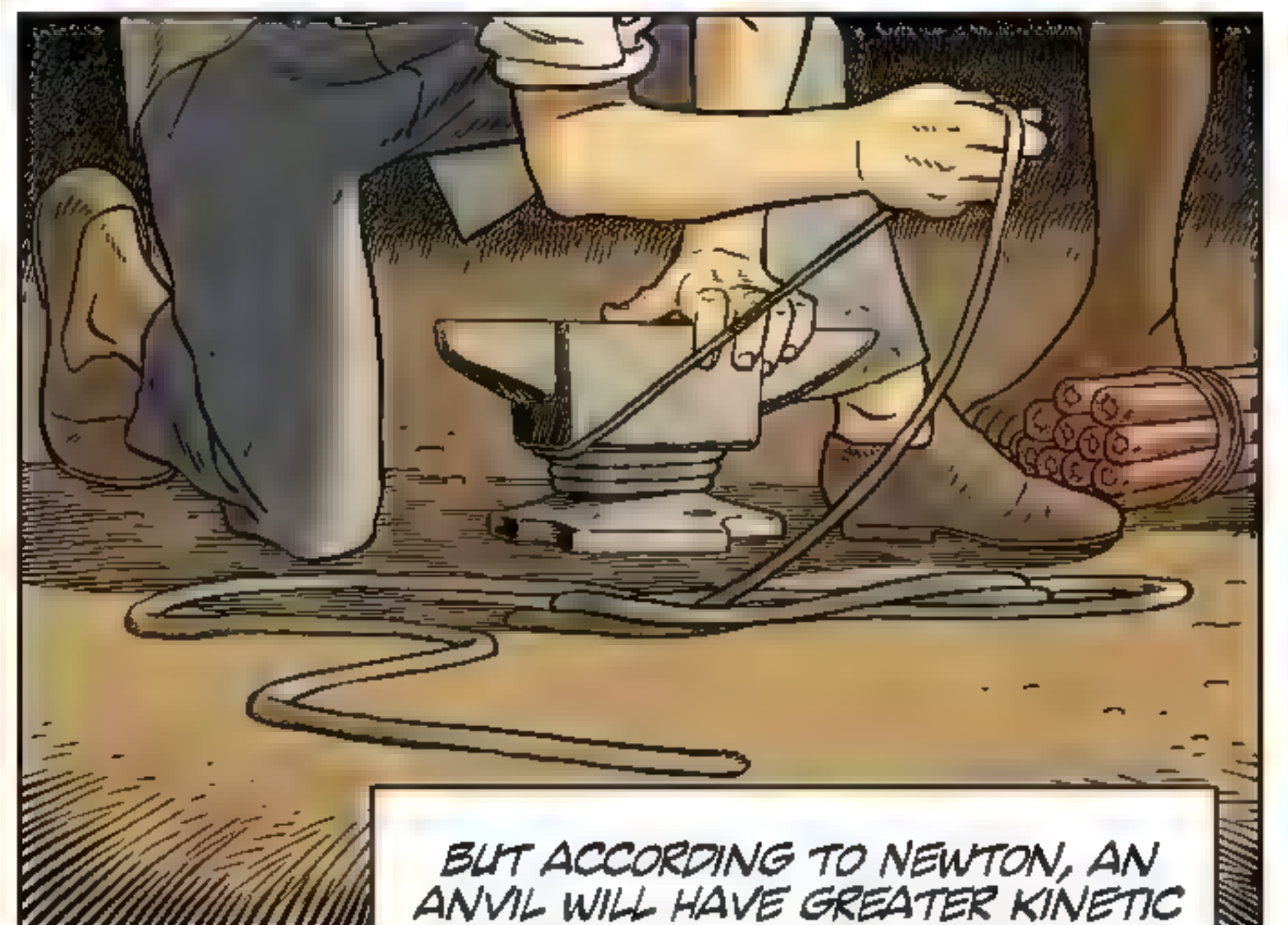
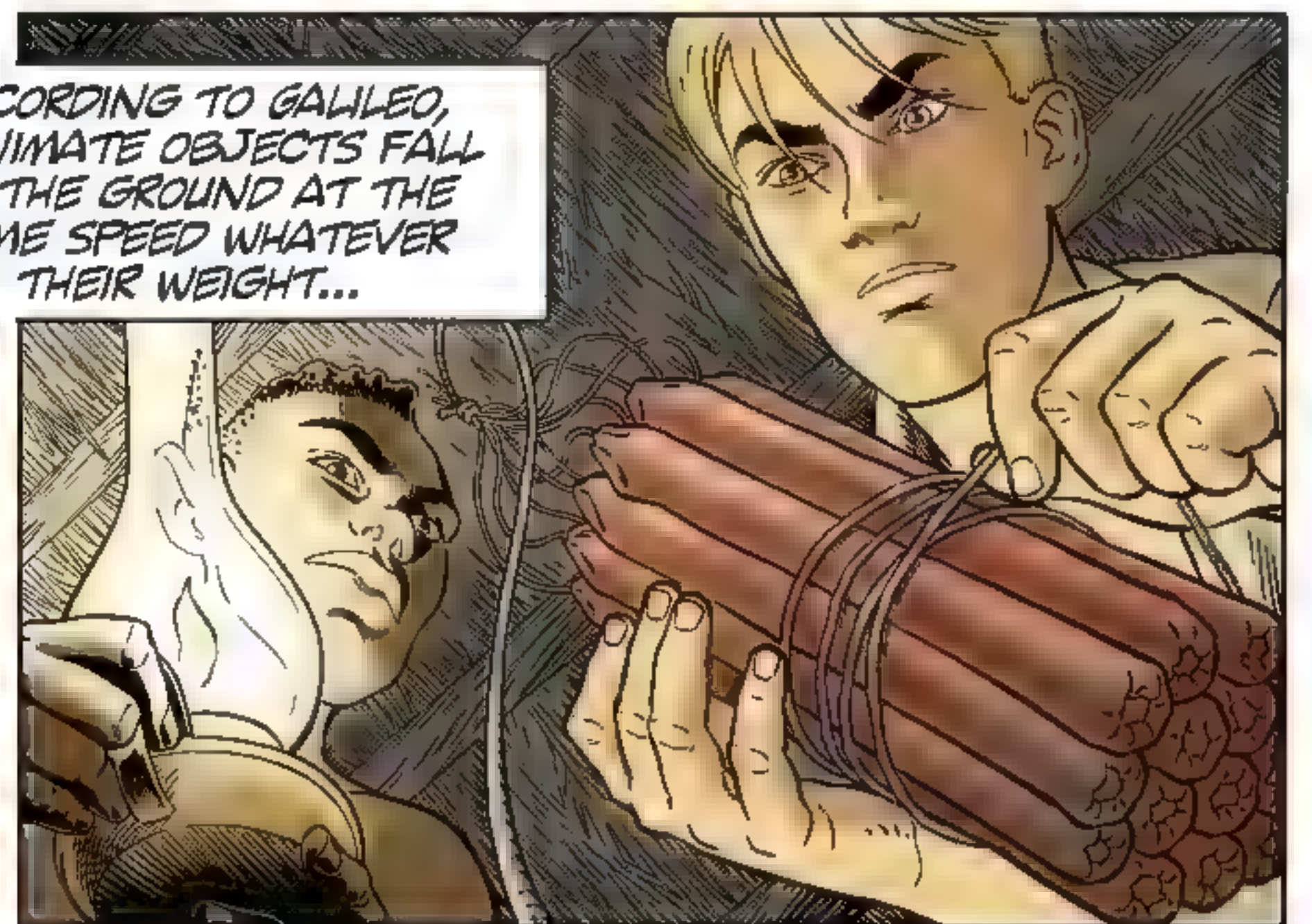
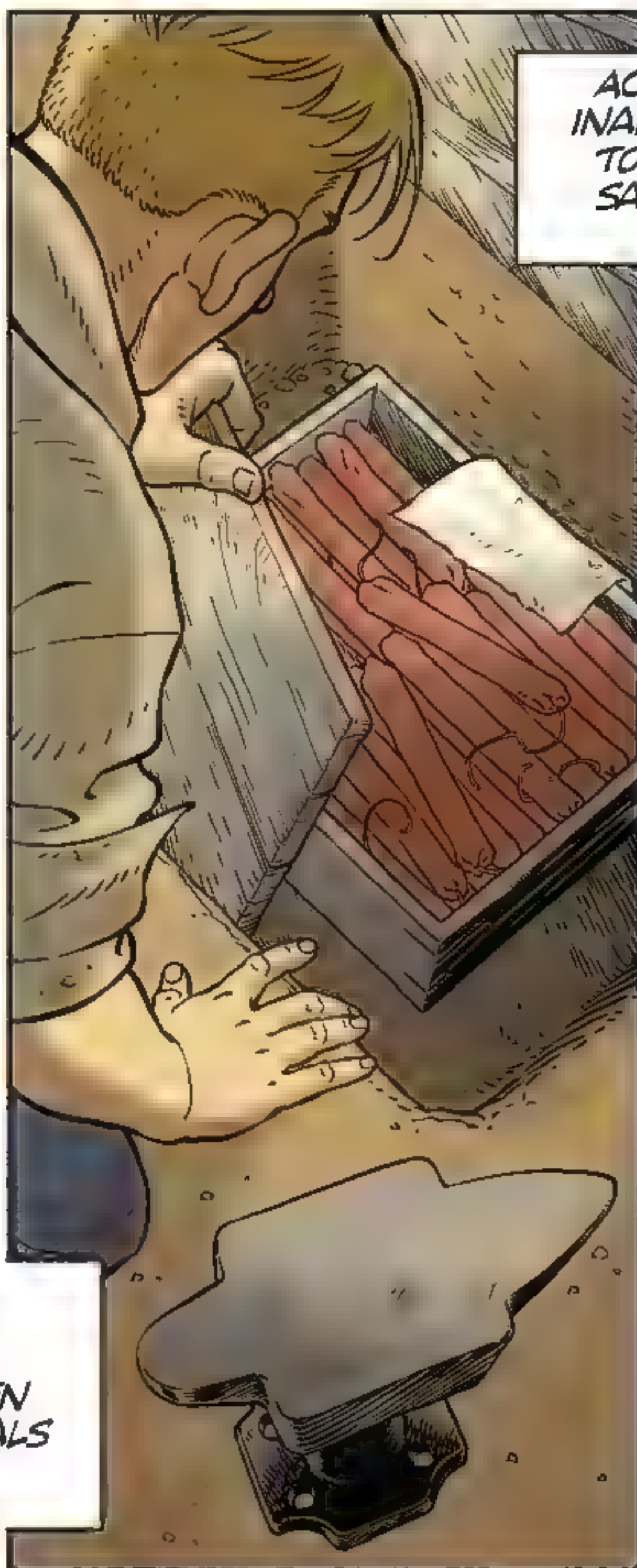
I'D DECIDED
TO FLY NORTH
TO JOIN UNCLE
FRIEDRICH!

BUT FIRST, THERE WAS SOMETHING
I HAD TO DO. SOMETHING AWFUL
THAT I CONSIDERED MY DUTY!



AND TO HELP ME CARRY IT OUT,
I WOULD NEED THE DYNAMITE
WE SOMETIMES USED TO FRIGHTEN
AWAY BUFFALO AND OTHER ANIMALS
FROM OUR LANDING STRIPS.

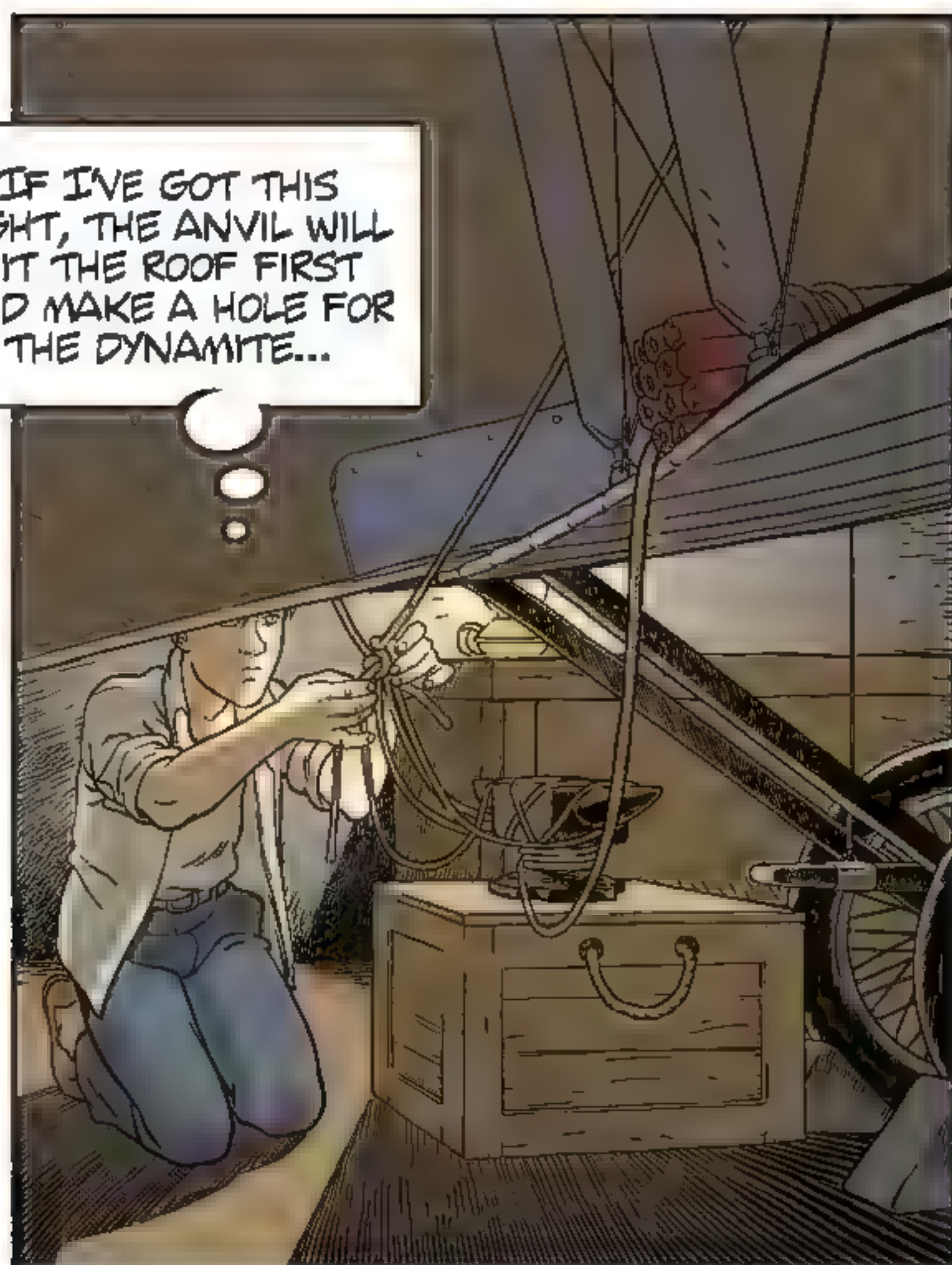
ACCORDING TO GALILEO,
INANIMATE OBJECTS FALL
TO THE GROUND AT THE
SAME SPEED WHATEVER
THEIR WEIGHT...



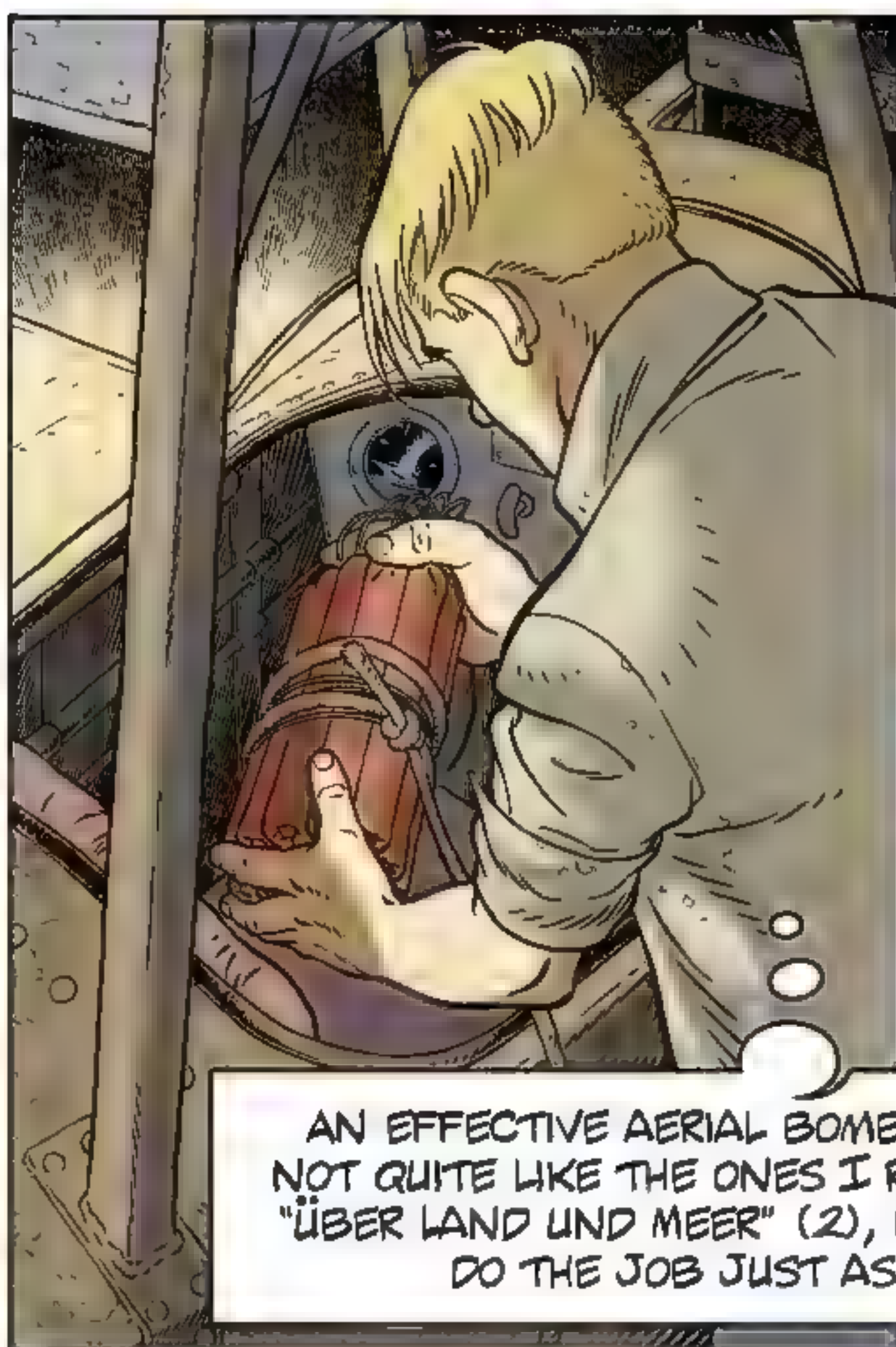
BUT ACCORDING TO NEWTON, AN
ANVIL WILL HAVE GREATER KINETIC
ENERGY THAN A FEW STICKS OF
DYNAMITE IF IT FALLS FROM A
PLANE FLYING AT SPEED. (1)

(1) $E = \frac{1}{2}MV^2$ (E: ENERGY; M: MASS; V: VELOCITY).

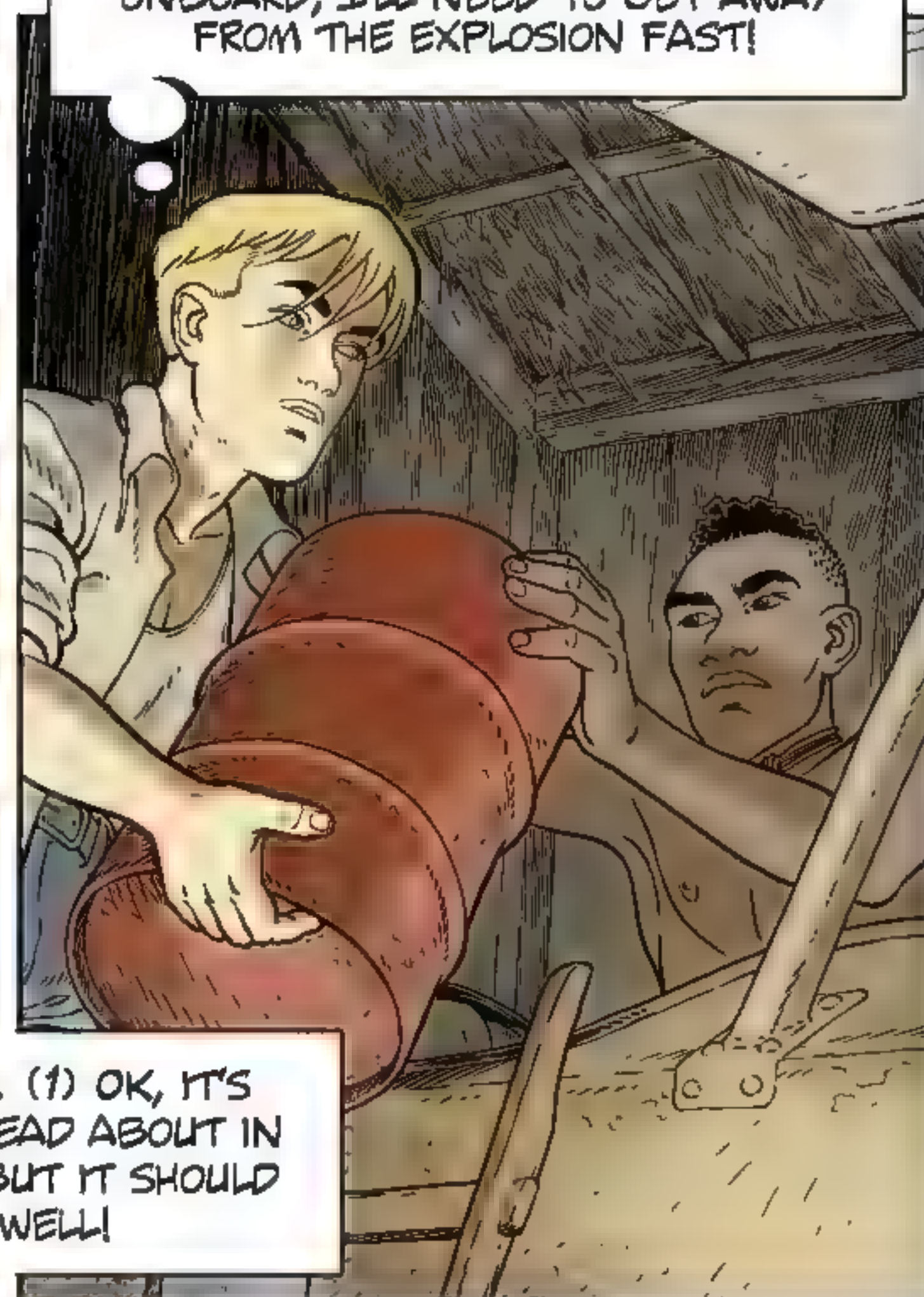
IF I'VE GOT THIS RIGHT, THE ANVIL WILL HIT THE ROOF FIRST AND MAKE A HOLE FOR THE DYNAMITE...



WITH THIS BARREL FULL OF FUEL ONBOARD, I'LL NEED TO GET AWAY FROM THE EXPLOSION FAST!



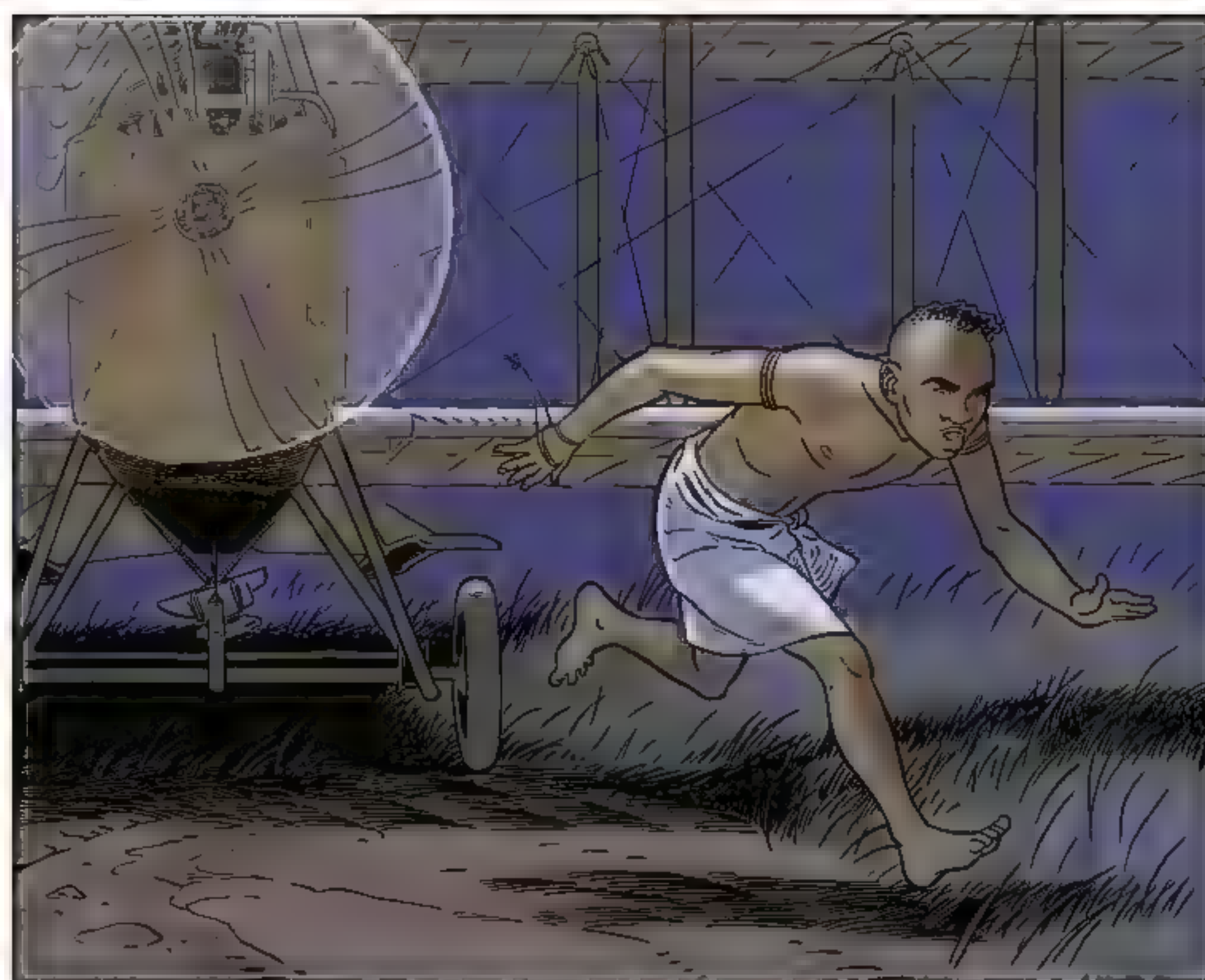
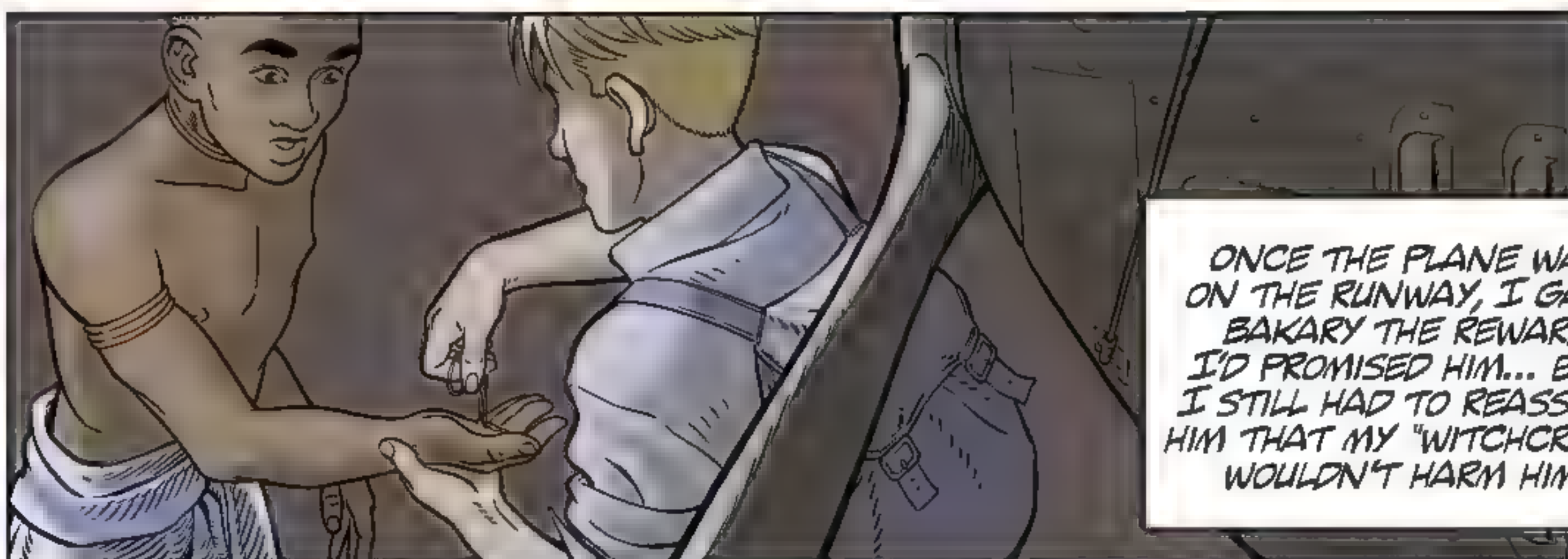
AN EFFECTIVE AERIAL BOMB. (1) OK, IT'S NOT QUITE LIKE THE ONES I READ ABOUT IN "ÜBER LAND UND MEER" (2), BUT IT SHOULD DO THE JOB JUST AS WELL!



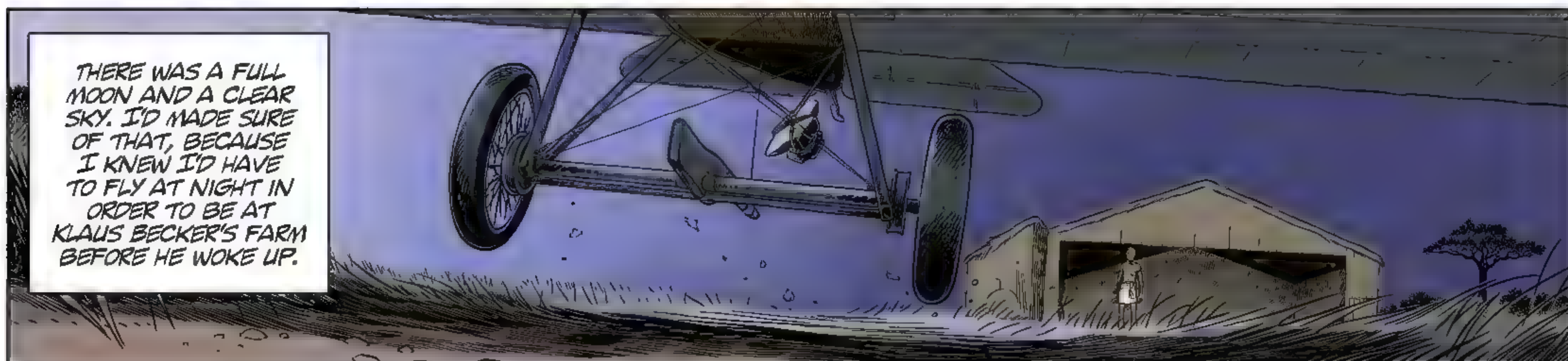
OUR FAITHFUL SERVANT AMANI WOULD HAVE REFUSED TO HELP, BUT HIS SON WAS ALL TOO HAPPY TO GIVE ME A HAND. ANYTHING TO ANNOY THAT KILLJOY PASTOR OF HIS!



ONCE THE PLANE WAS ON THE RUNWAY, I GAVE BAKARY THE REWARD I'D PROMISED HIM... BUT I STILL HAD TO REASSURE HIM THAT MY "WITCHCRAFT" WOULDN'T HARM HIM.

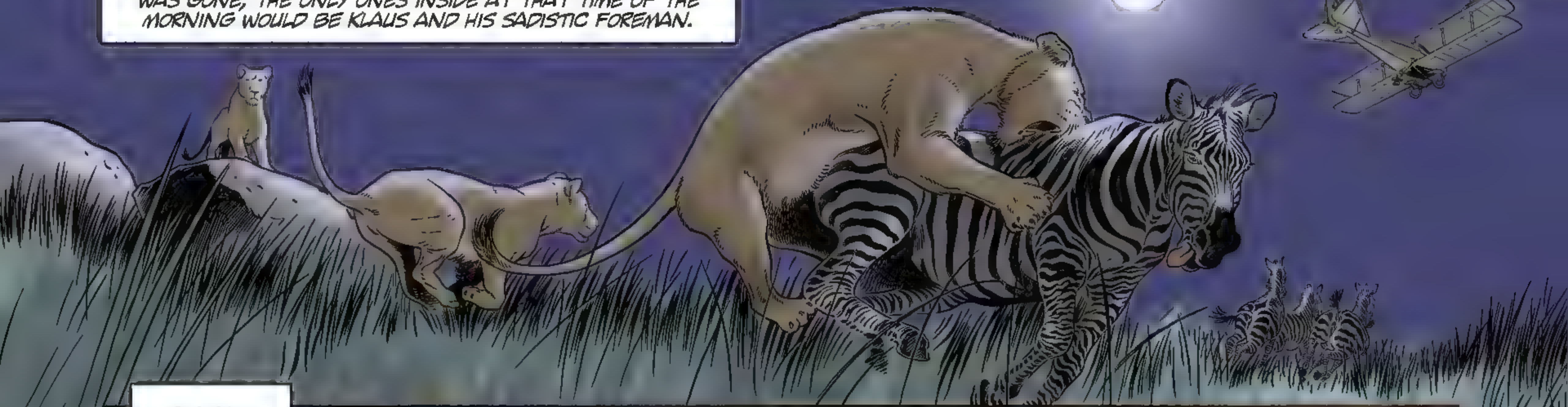


THERE WAS A FULL MOON AND A CLEAR SKY. I'D MADE SURE OF THAT, BECAUSE I KNEW I'D HAVE TO FLY AT NIGHT IN ORDER TO BE AT KLAUS BECKER'S FARM BEFORE HE WOKE UP.

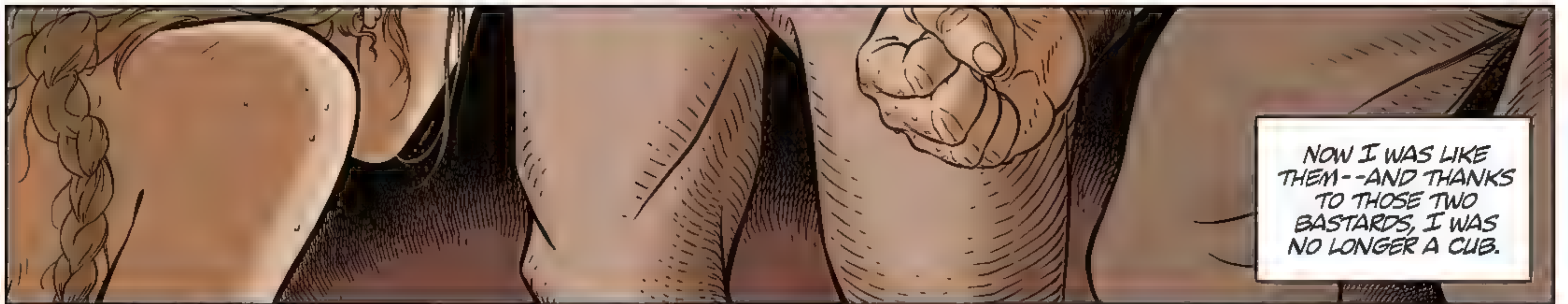


(1) THE TERM "AERIAL BOMB" WAS COINED DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. LATER, EXPLOSIVES DROPPED FROM AIRPLANES WERE SIMPLY CALLED "BOMBS."
(2) A MAGAZINE PUBLISHED IN STUTTGART BETWEEN 1885 AND 1923 THAT WAS FILLED WITH STORIES OF ADVENTURE AND EXPLORATION.

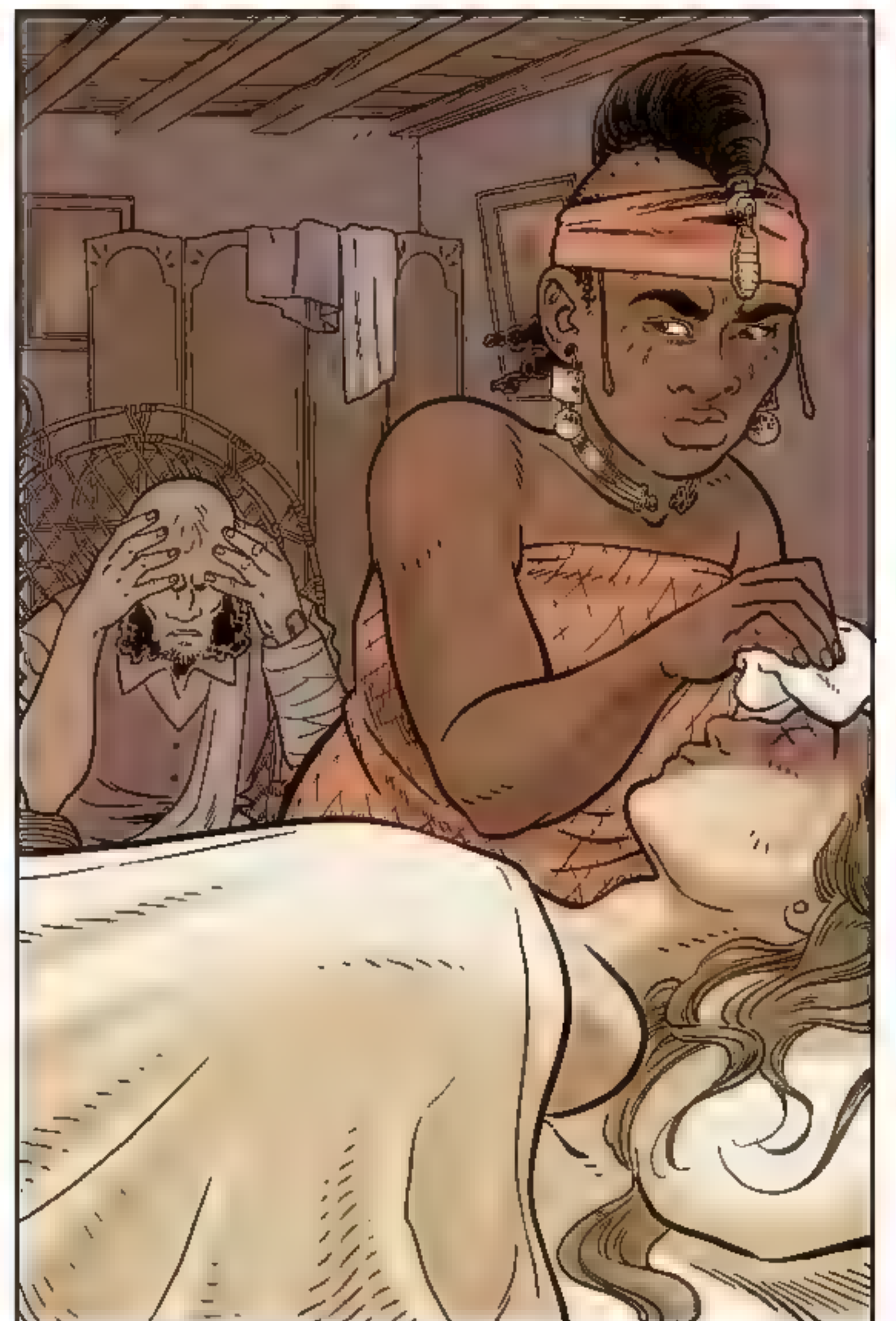
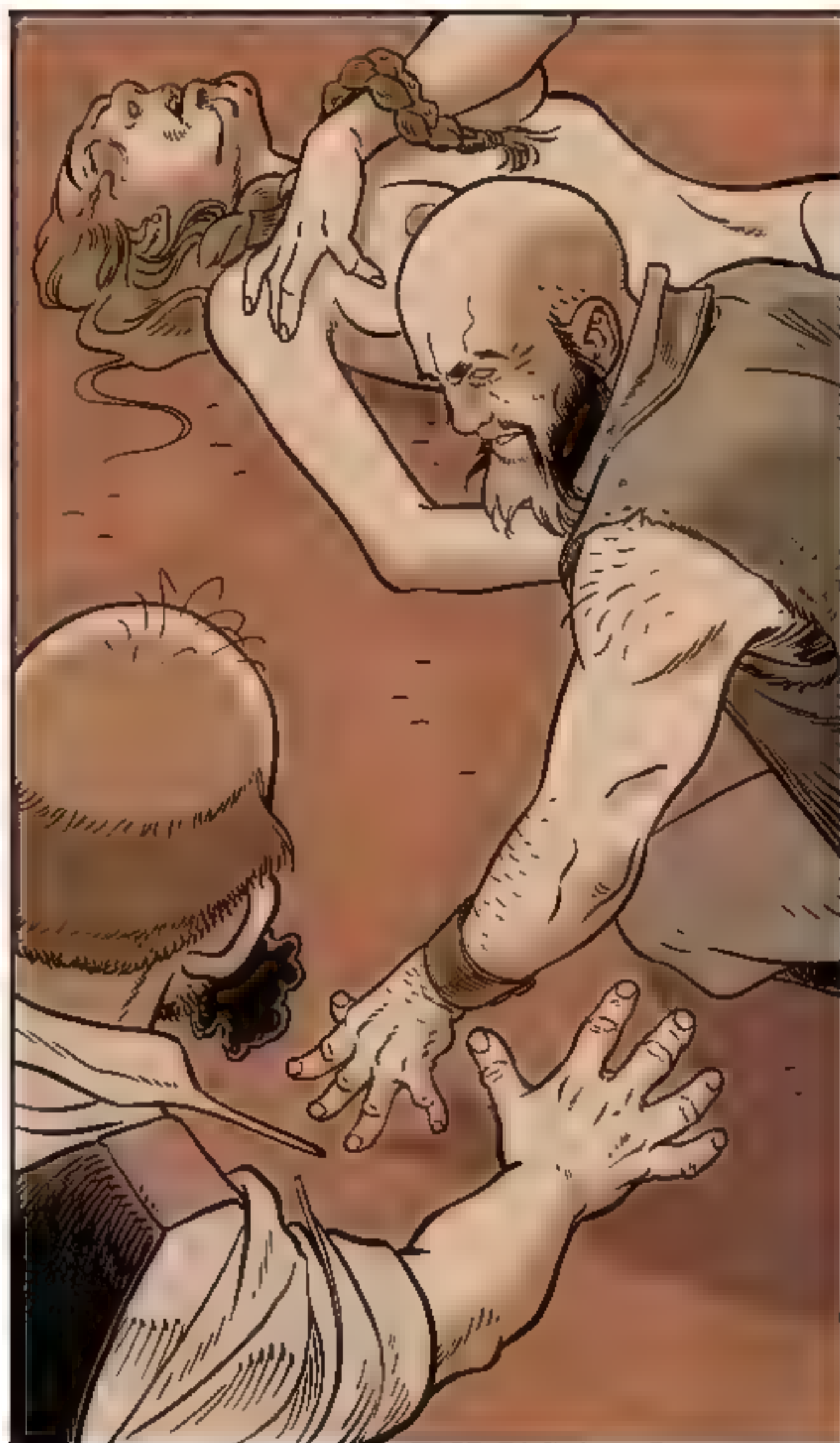
WHEN I'D STAYED THERE, I'D FOUND OUT THAT NONE OF THE SERVANTS SLEPT IN THE FARMHOUSE. SINCE SILKE WAS GONE, THE ONLY ONES INSIDE AT THAT TIME OF THE MORNING WOULD BE KLAUS AND HIS SADISTIC FOREMAN.



BIG CATS ALWAYS HUNT AT NIGHT.



NOW I WAS LIKE THEM--AND THANKS TO THOSE TWO BASTARDS, I WAS NO LONGER A CUB.





IN PANIC, KLAUS CALLED FOR THE DOCTOR--YOUR FATHER.



BUT SADLY, IT WAS ALREADY TOO LATE.



SO HE BEGGED FOR FORGIVENESS, AND HIS PASTOR LEFT HIM TO ANSWER TO...

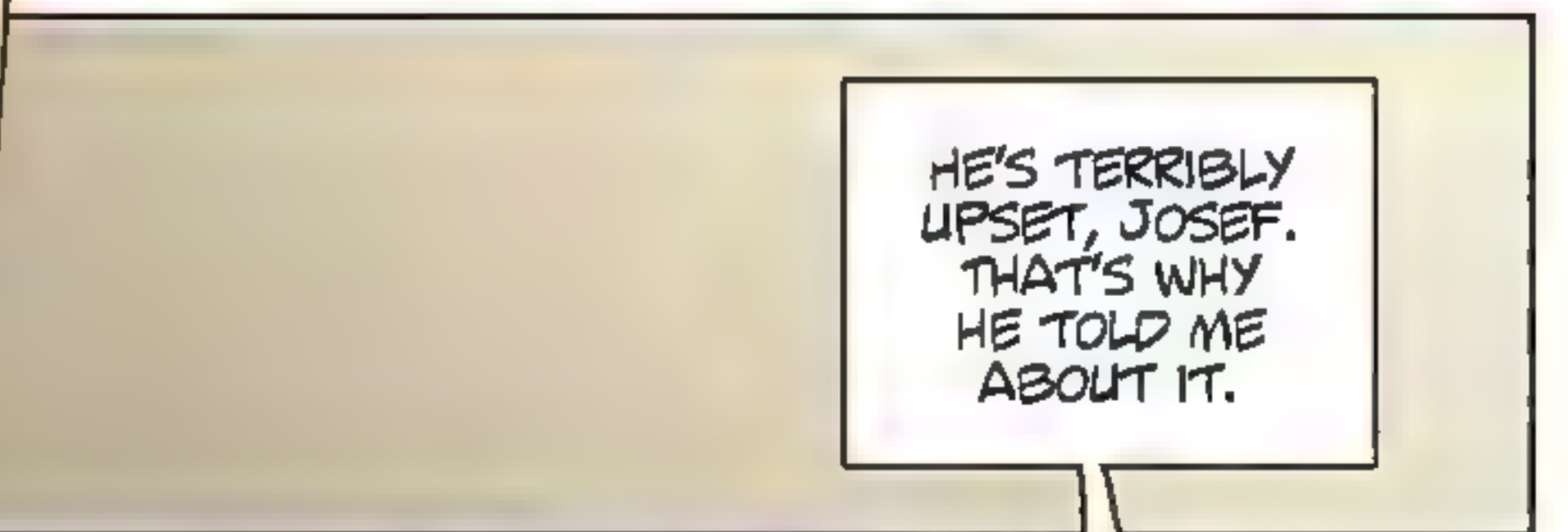


...GOD AND HIS CONSCIENCE!

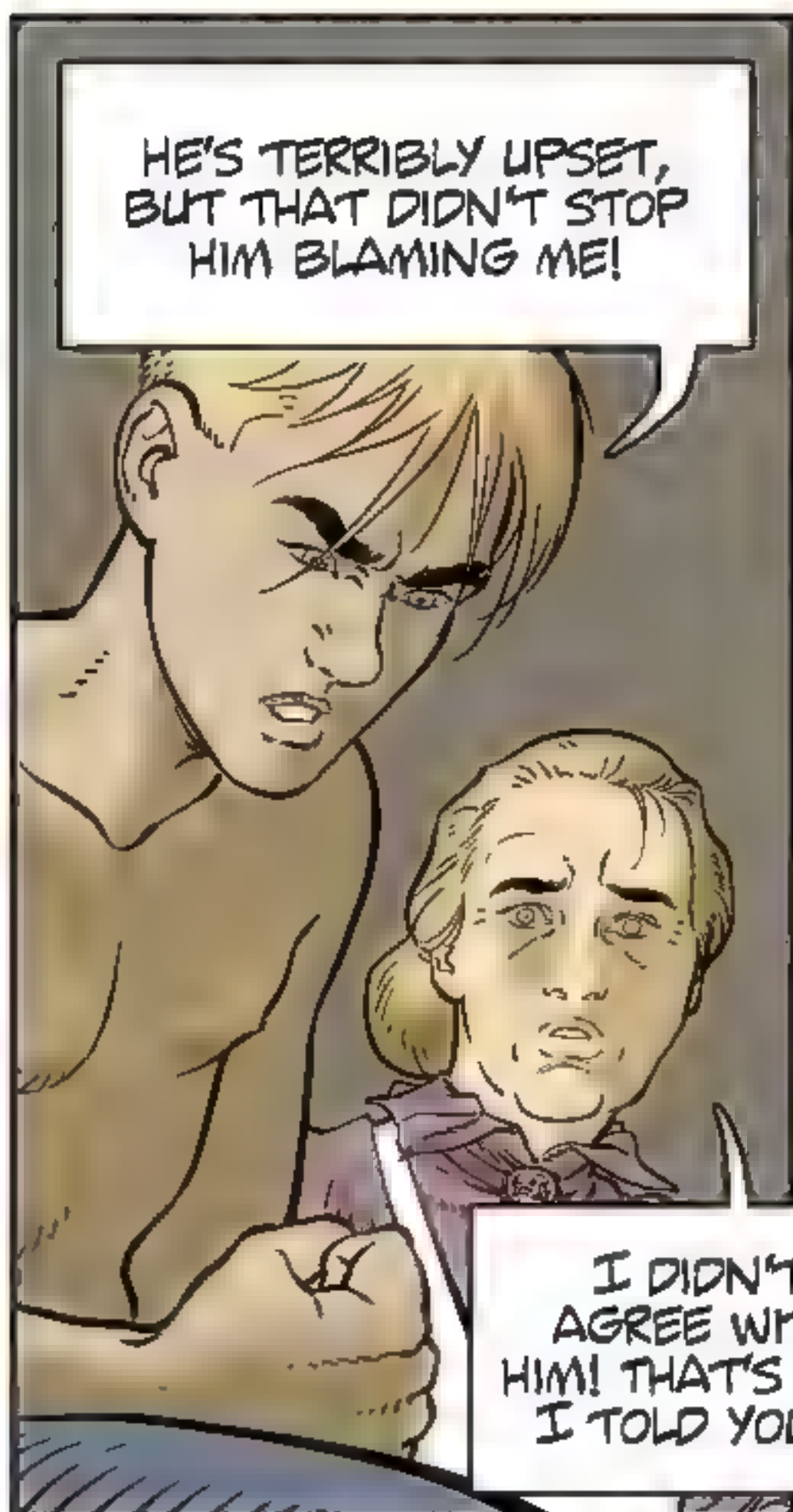
BUT AS A GERMAN, HE COULDN'T BRING HIMSELF TO DENOUNCE KLAUS TO THE BELGIAN OCCUPIERS.



IT'S DISGUSTING! FATHER CAN'T LET HIM GET AWAY WITH THIS!



HE'S TERRIBLY UPSET, JOSEF. THAT'S WHY HE TOLD ME ABOUT IT.

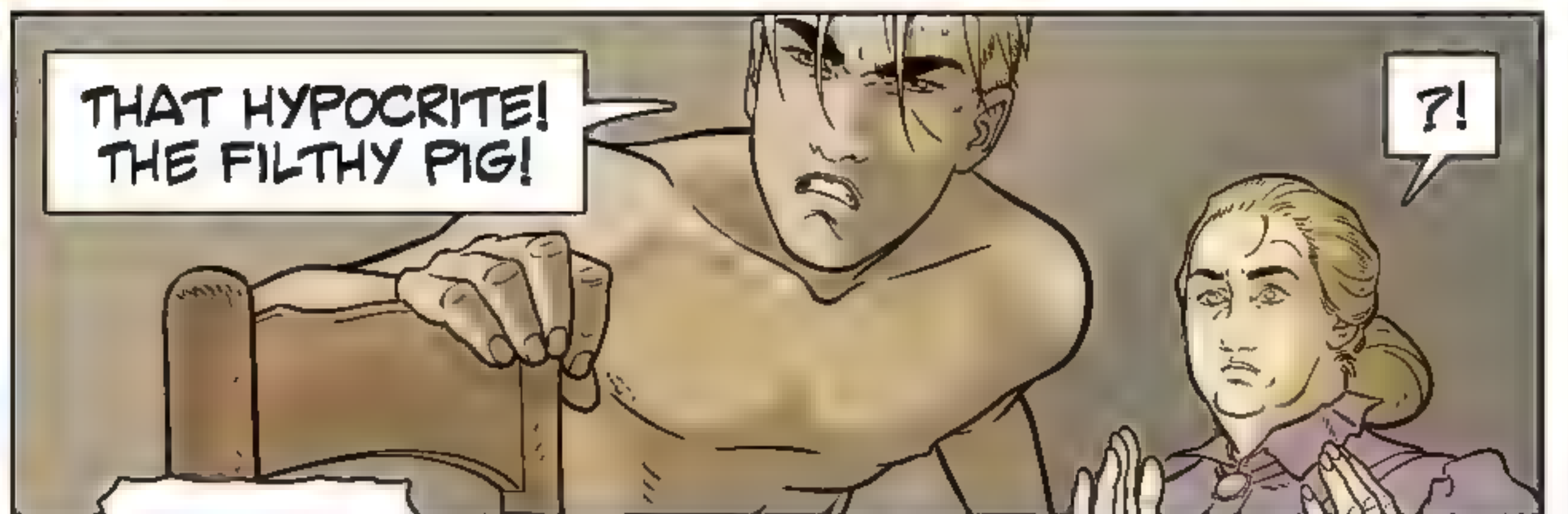


HE'S TERRIBLY UPSET, BUT THAT DIDN'T STOP HIM BLAMING ME!

I DIDN'T AGREE WITH HIM! THAT'S WHY I TOLD YOU...

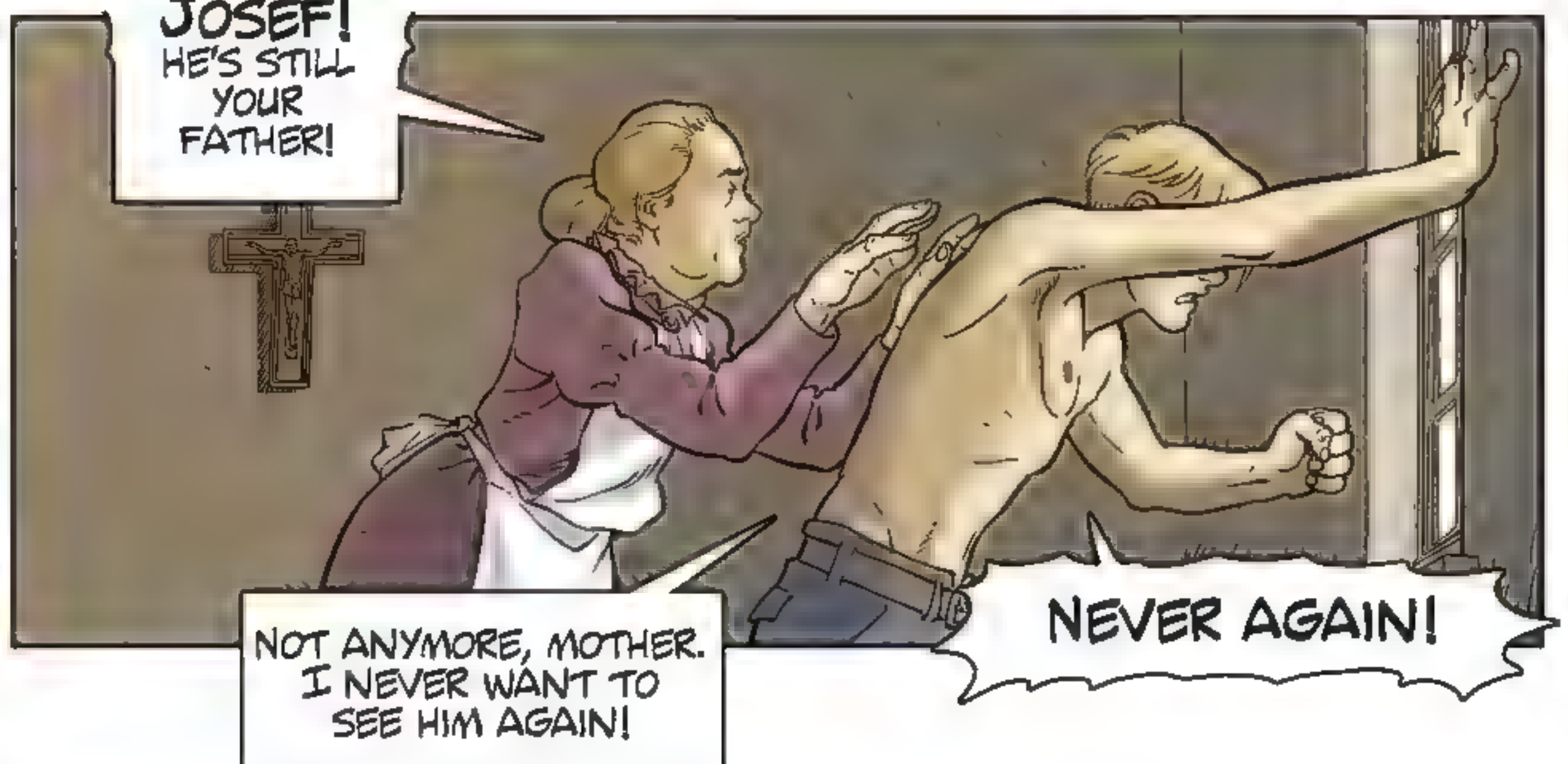


YOU WON'T TELL HIM I DID, WILL YOU? PROMISE ME!



THAT HYPOCRITE! THE FILTHY PIG!

?!

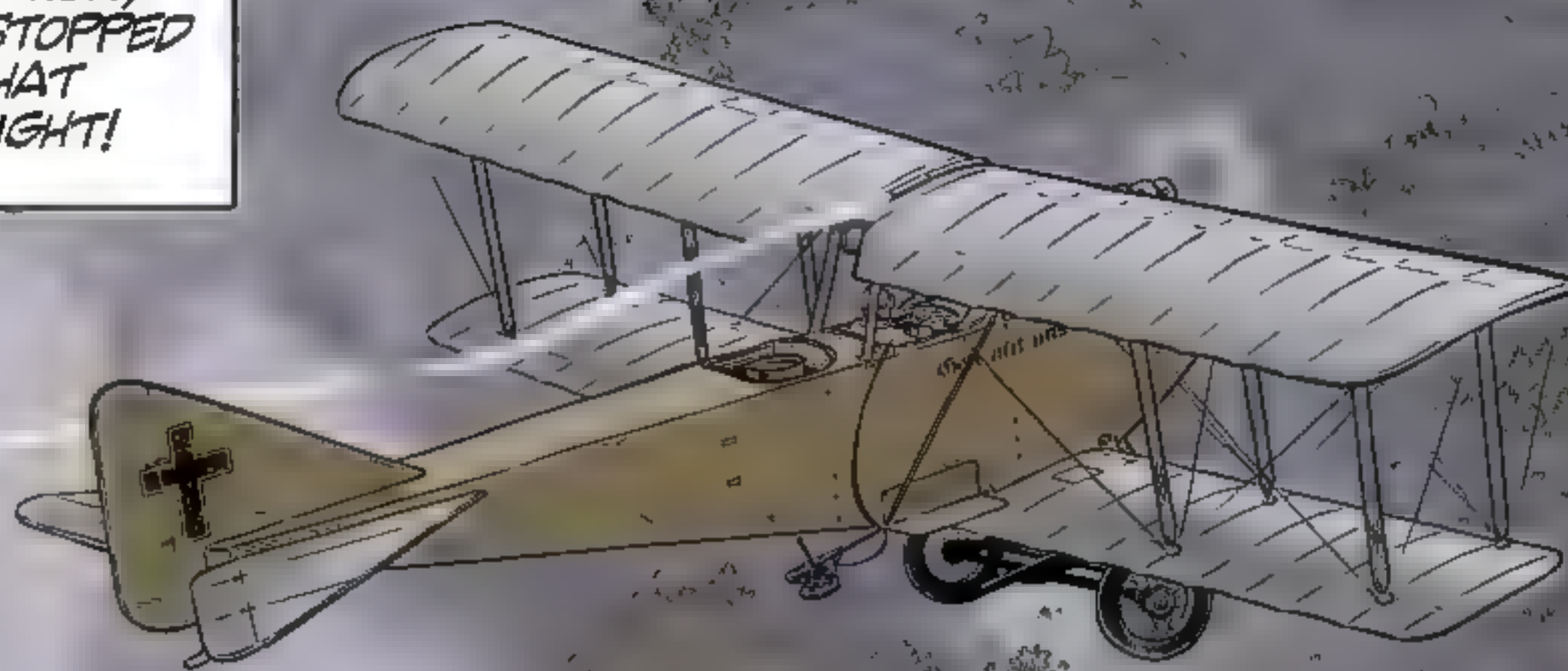


JOSEF! HE'S STILL YOUR FATHER!

NOT ANYMORE, MOTHER. I NEVER WANT TO SEE HIM AGAIN!

NEVER AGAIN!

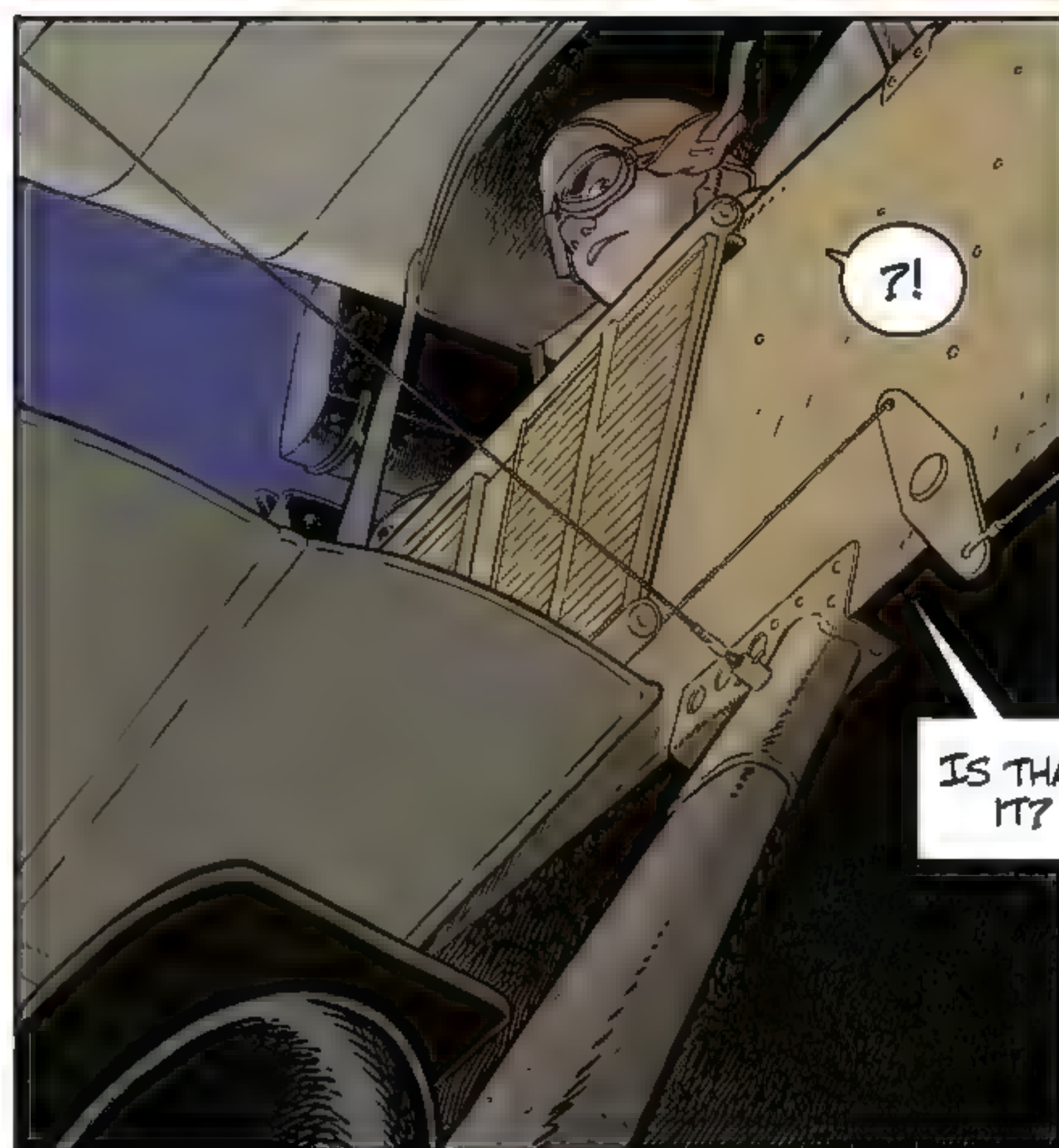
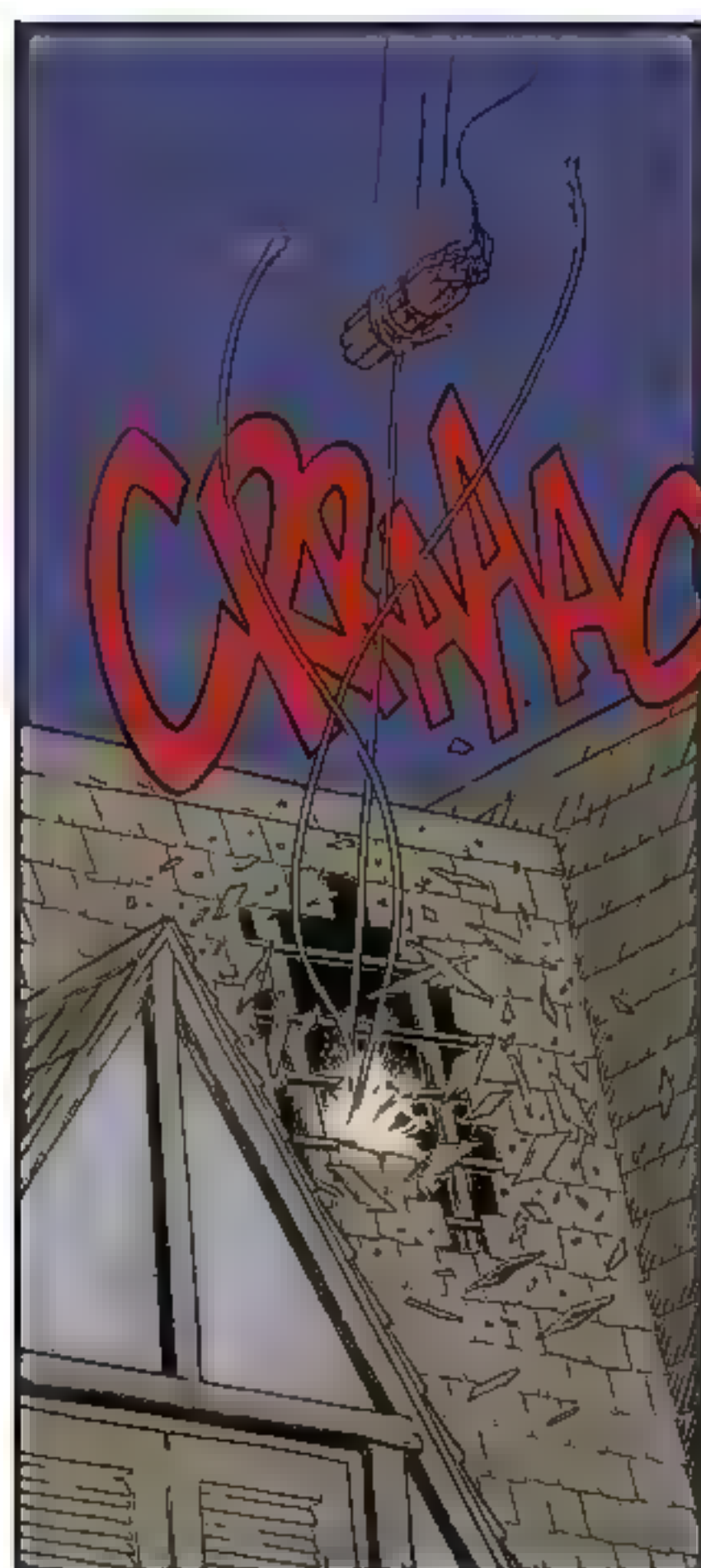
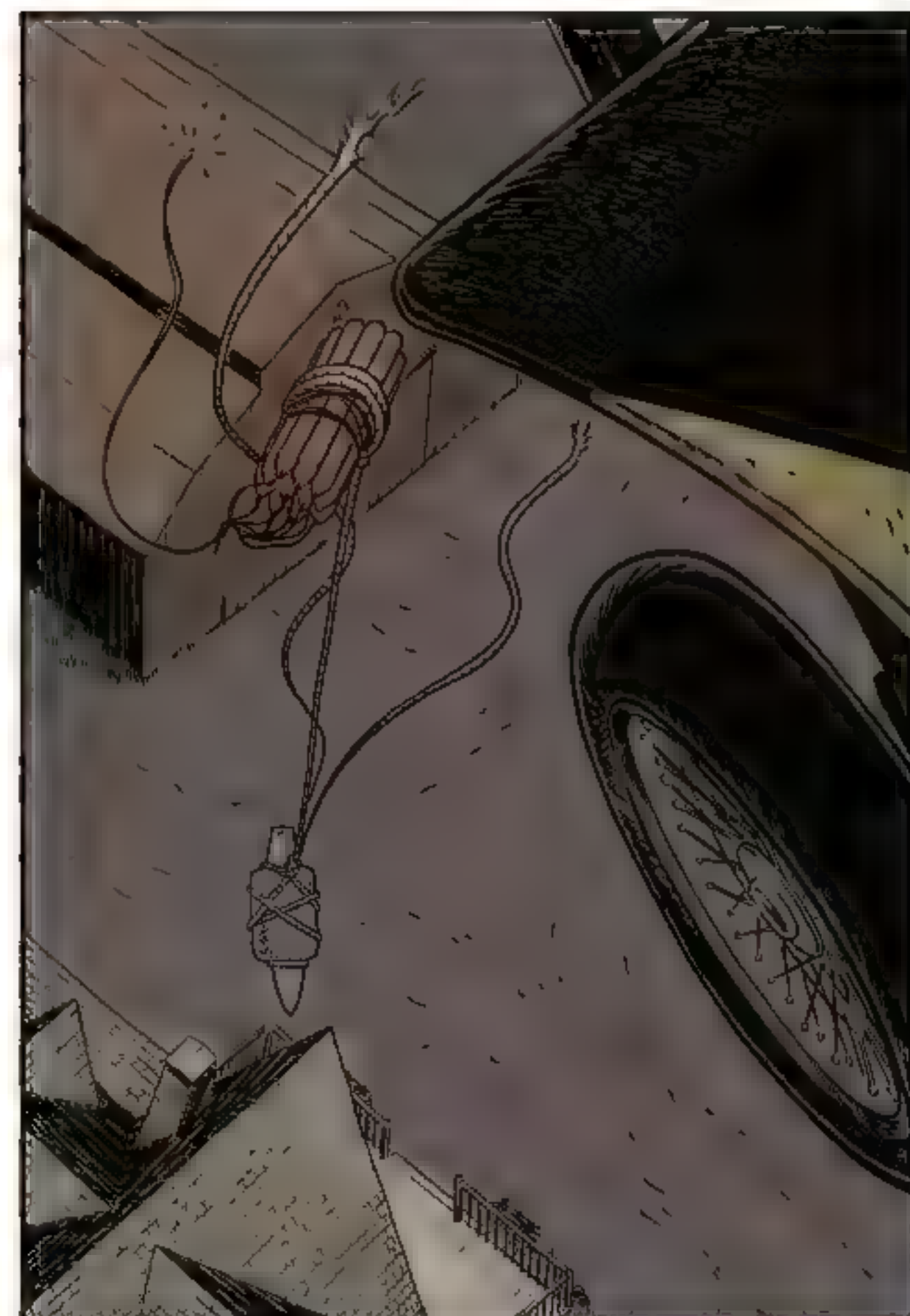
THE DAY OF RECKONING HAD FINALLY DAWNED, AND EVEN IF I'D BEEN THREATENED WITH ETERNAL DAMNATION, NOTHING COULD HAVE STOPPED ME FROM DOING WHAT I BELIEVED TO BE RIGHT!



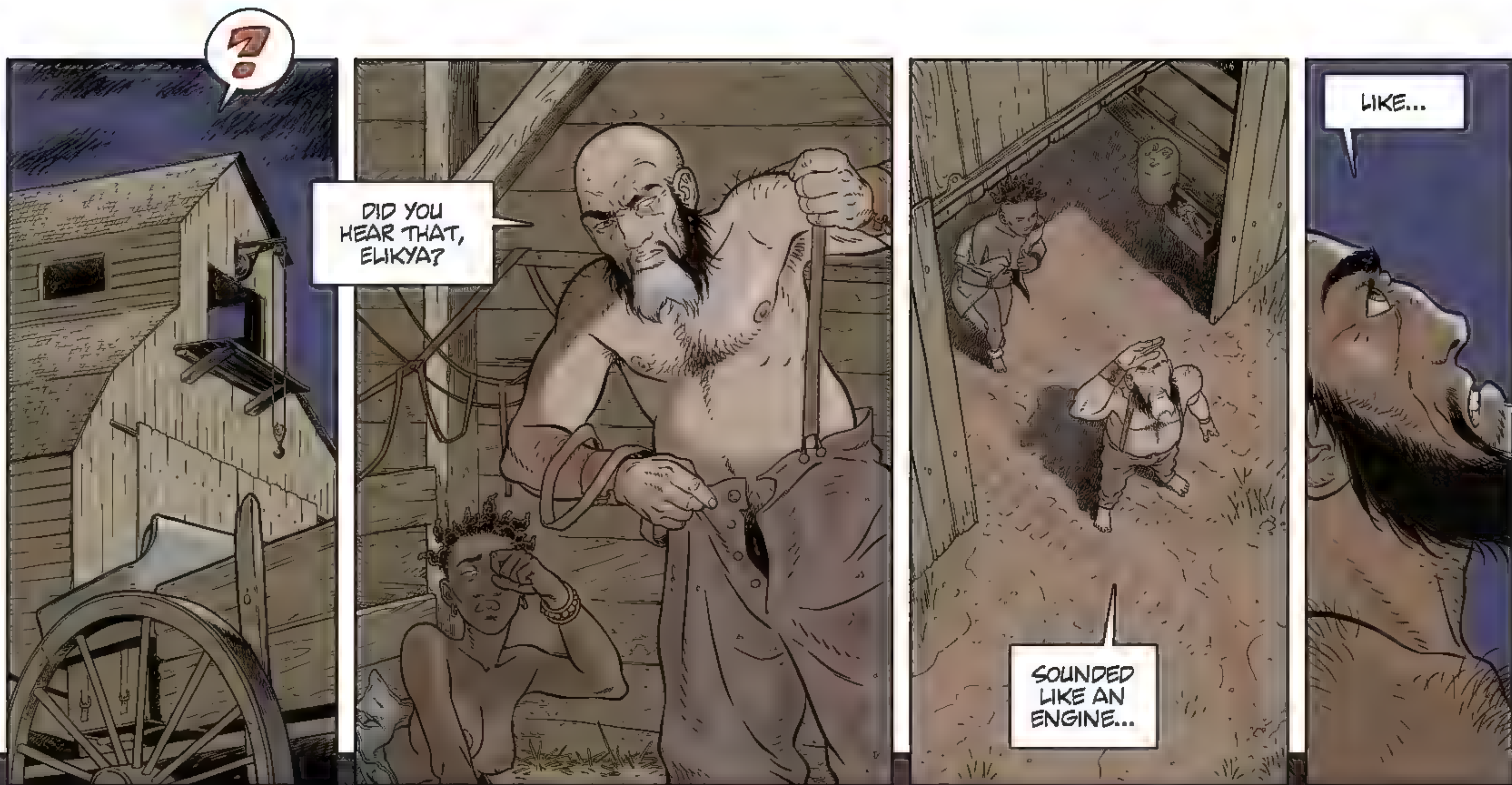
I DIDN'T REALIZE THEN THAT BEING RIGHT DOESN'T ENTITLE YOU TO METE OUT JUSTICE. BUT WHAT REALLY SHOULD HAVE GIVEN ME PAUSE...

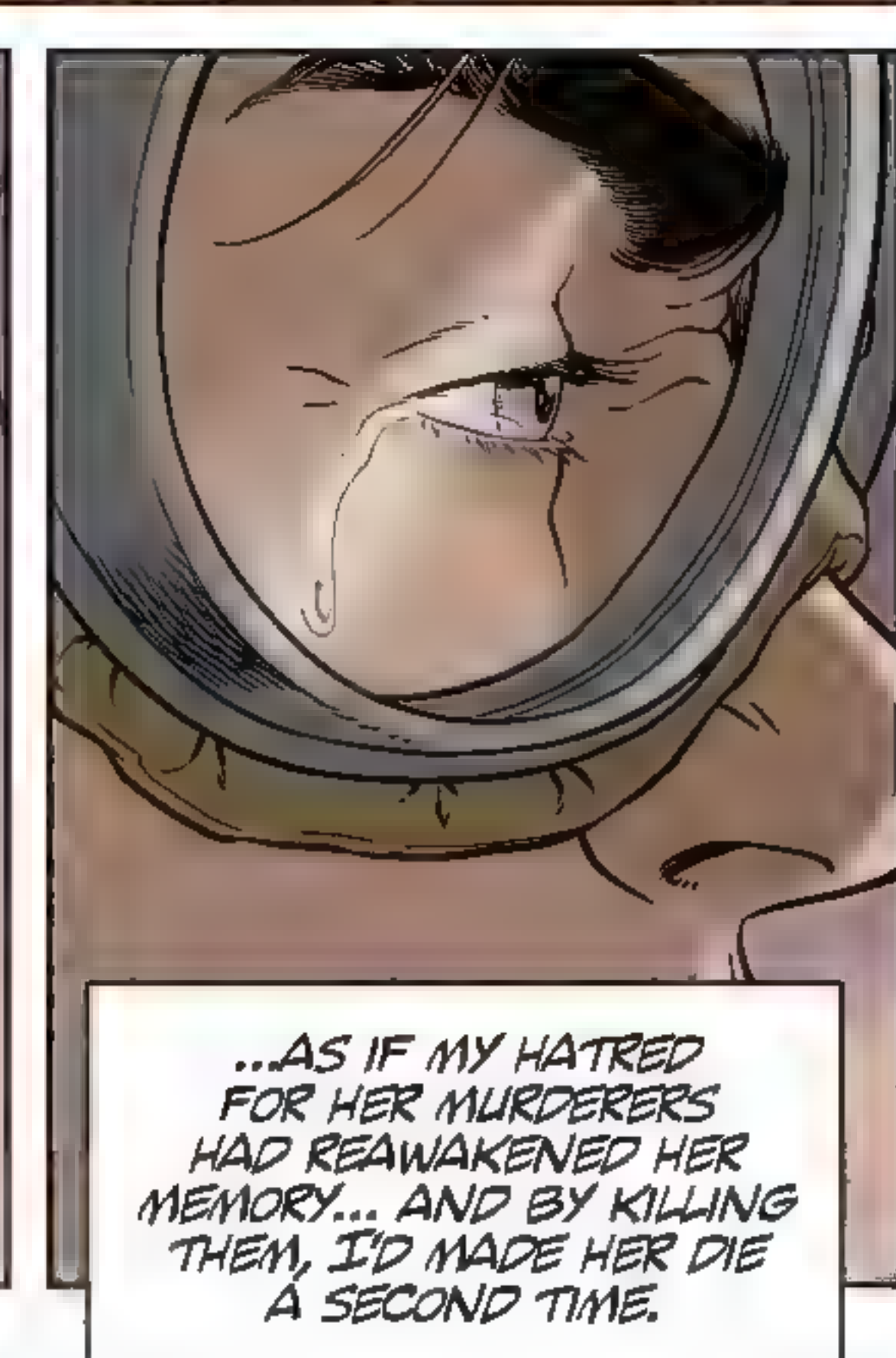
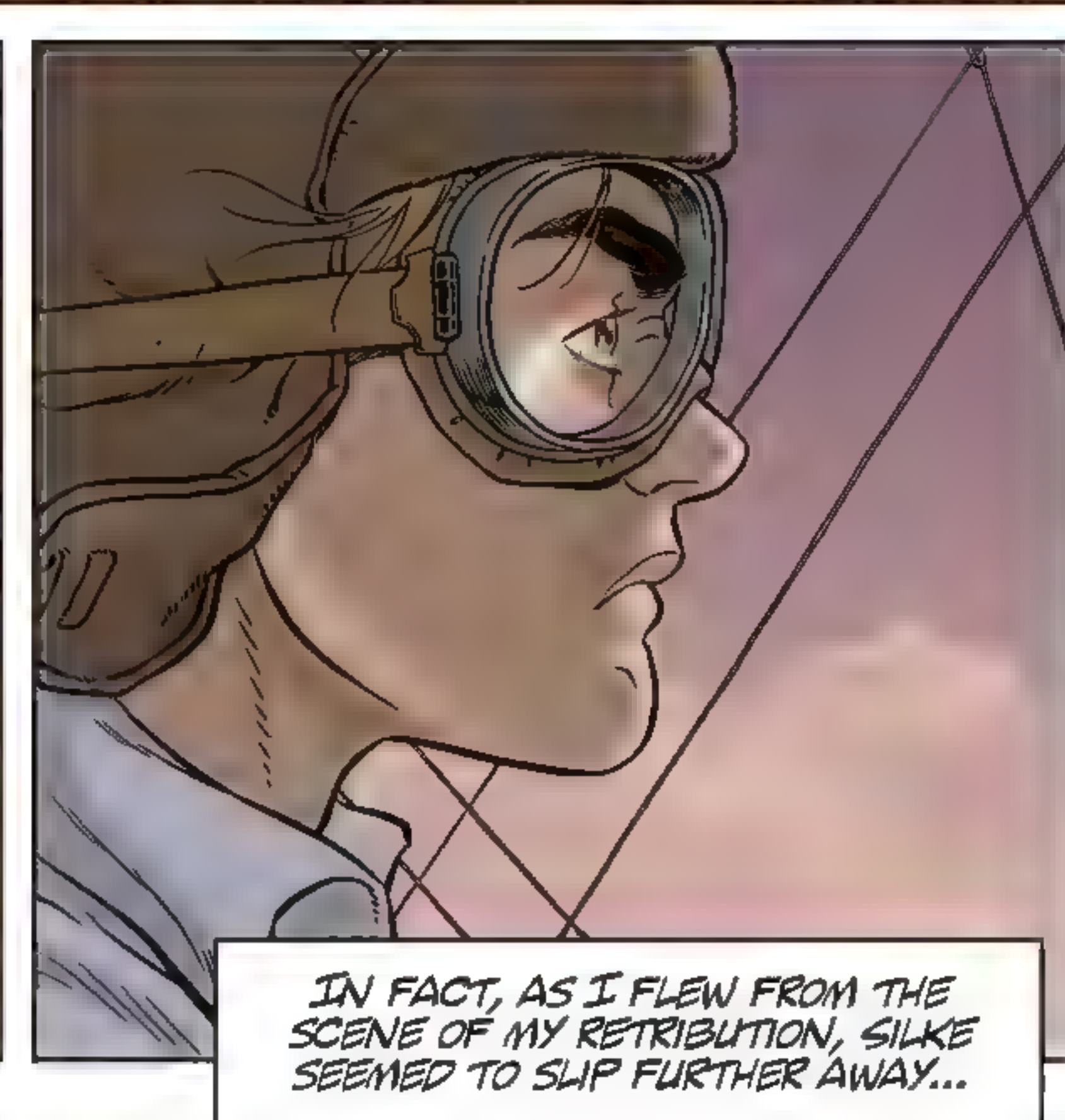
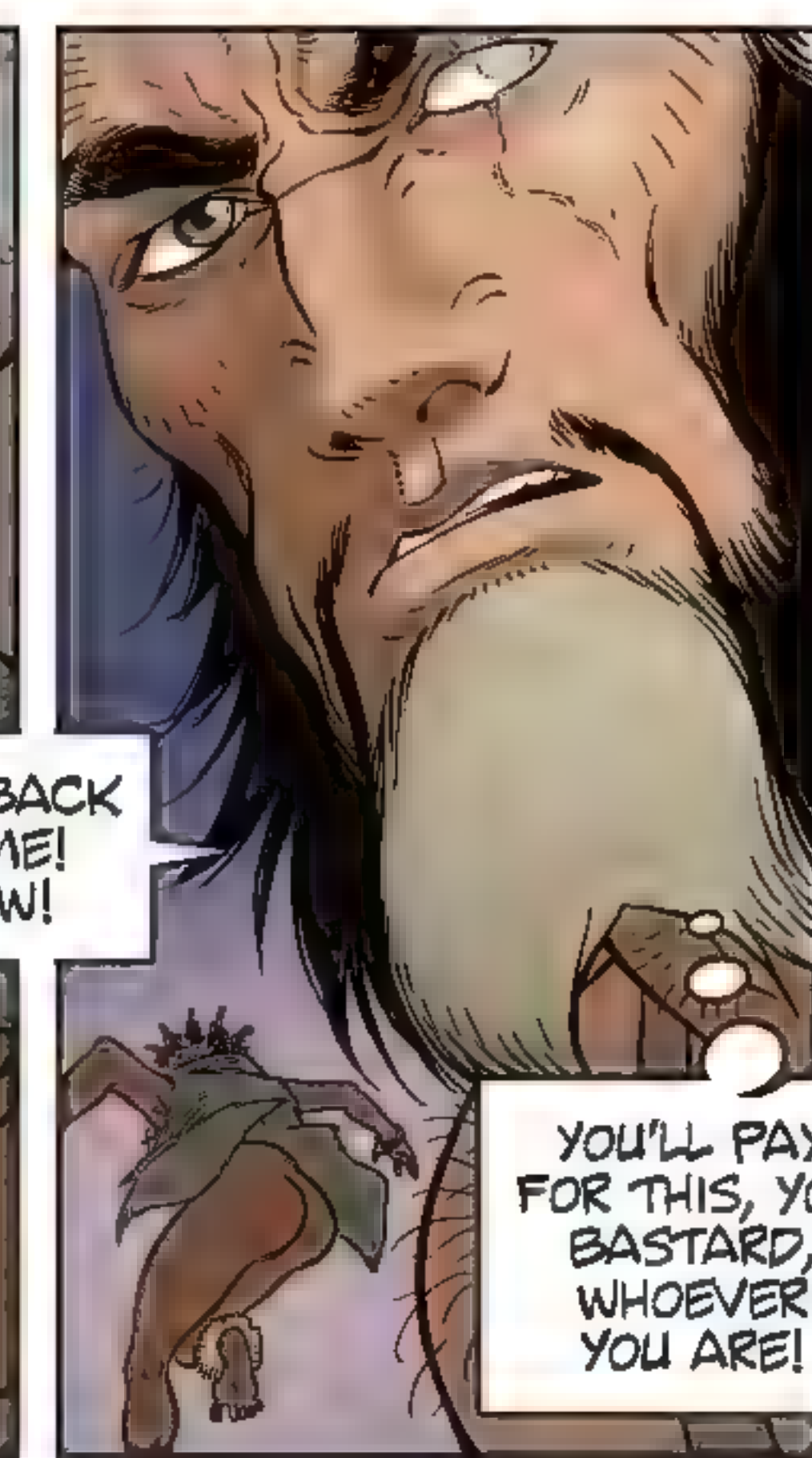
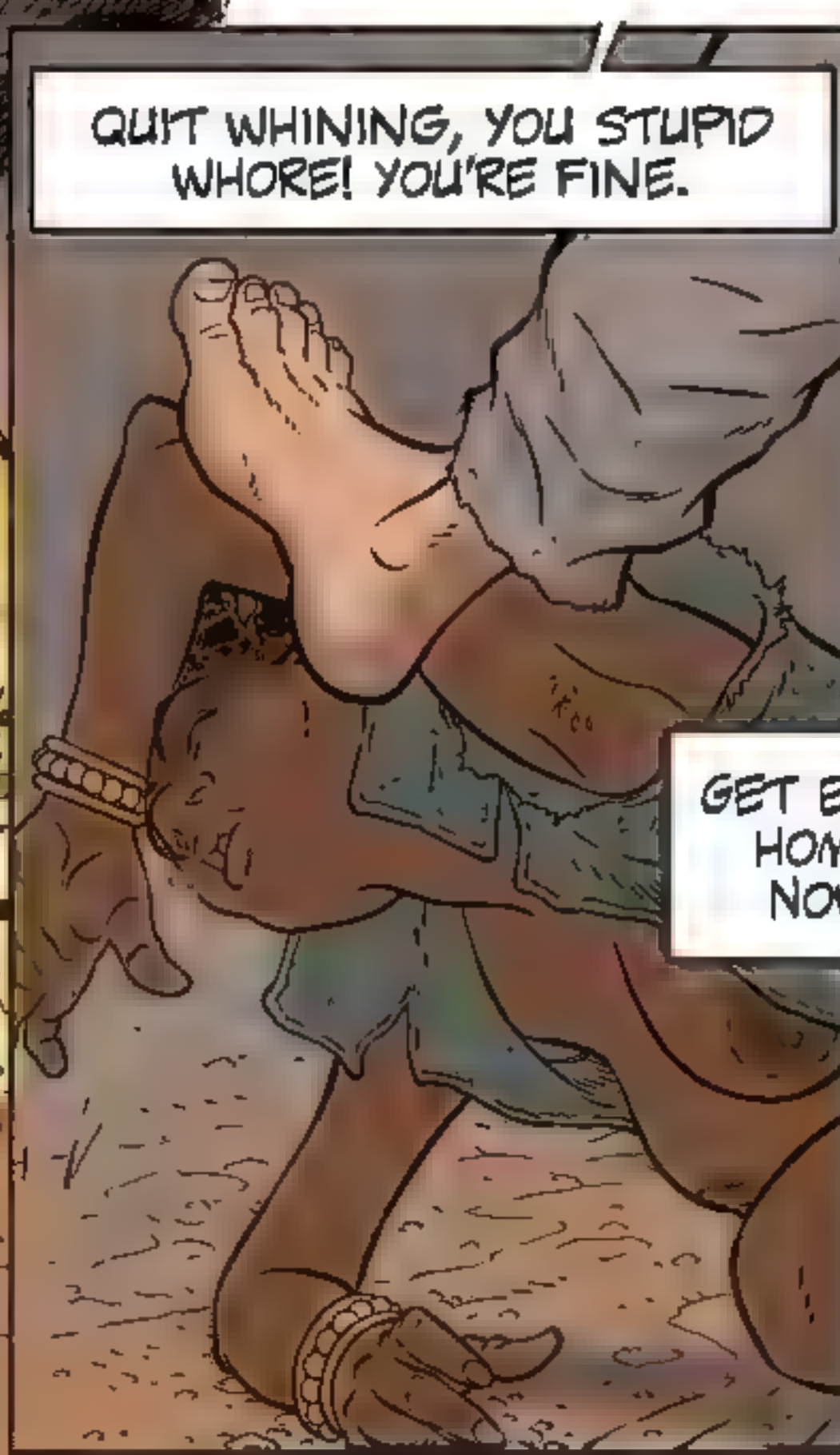
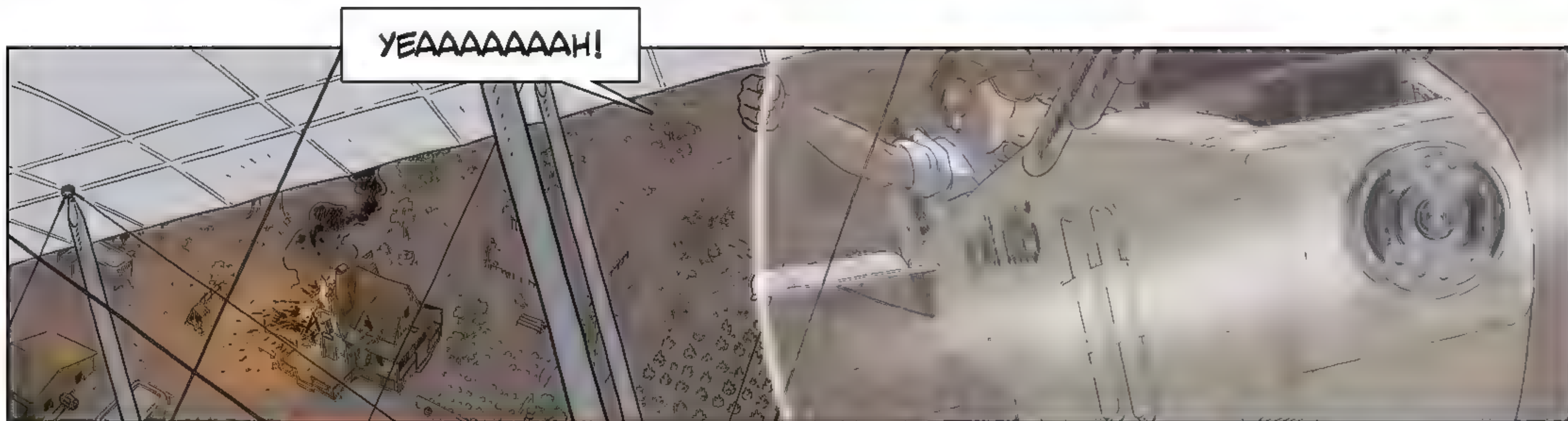


...WAS THE THIRST FOR BLOOD THAT TOOK ME OVER AS I DROVE THE PLANE TOWARD ITS TARGET.



IS THAT IT?





LOOKING DOWN ON THE
MAGNIFICENT PLAINS
WHERE I'D SPENT MY
YOUTH, I ALSO REALIZED
THAT IT, TOO, HAD
COME TO AN END.

IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR MY URGENT NEED TO FIND MY UNCLE FRIEDRICH,
I'D PROBABLY HAVE BURST INTO TEARS LIKE A KID ONE LAST TIME.

YOU CAN ONLY
FLY 185 MORE
MILES, JOSEF,
SO THINK FAST
AND THINK
STRAIGHT!

Gott mit uns

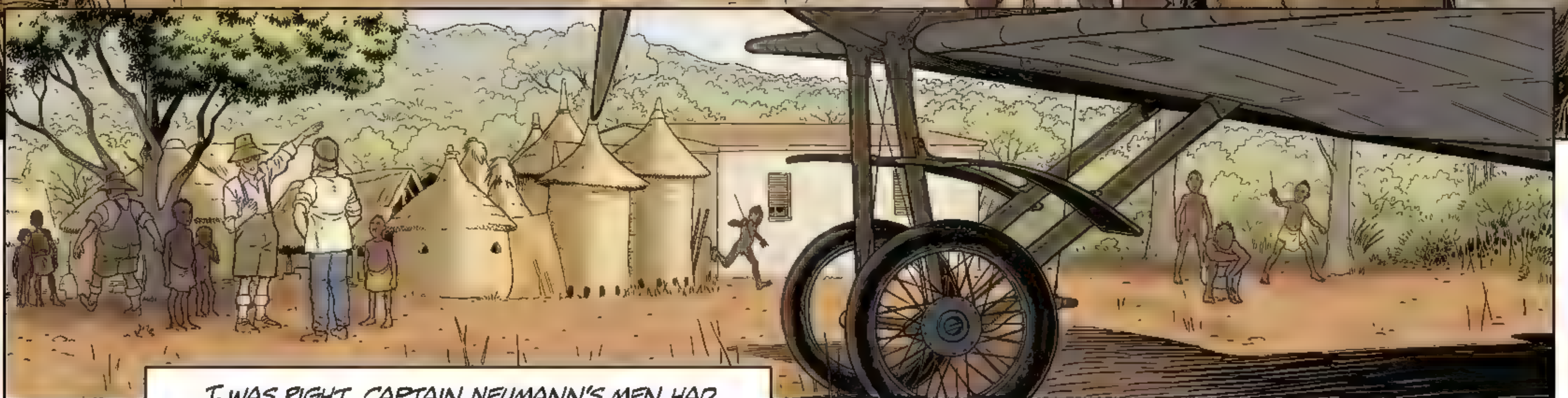
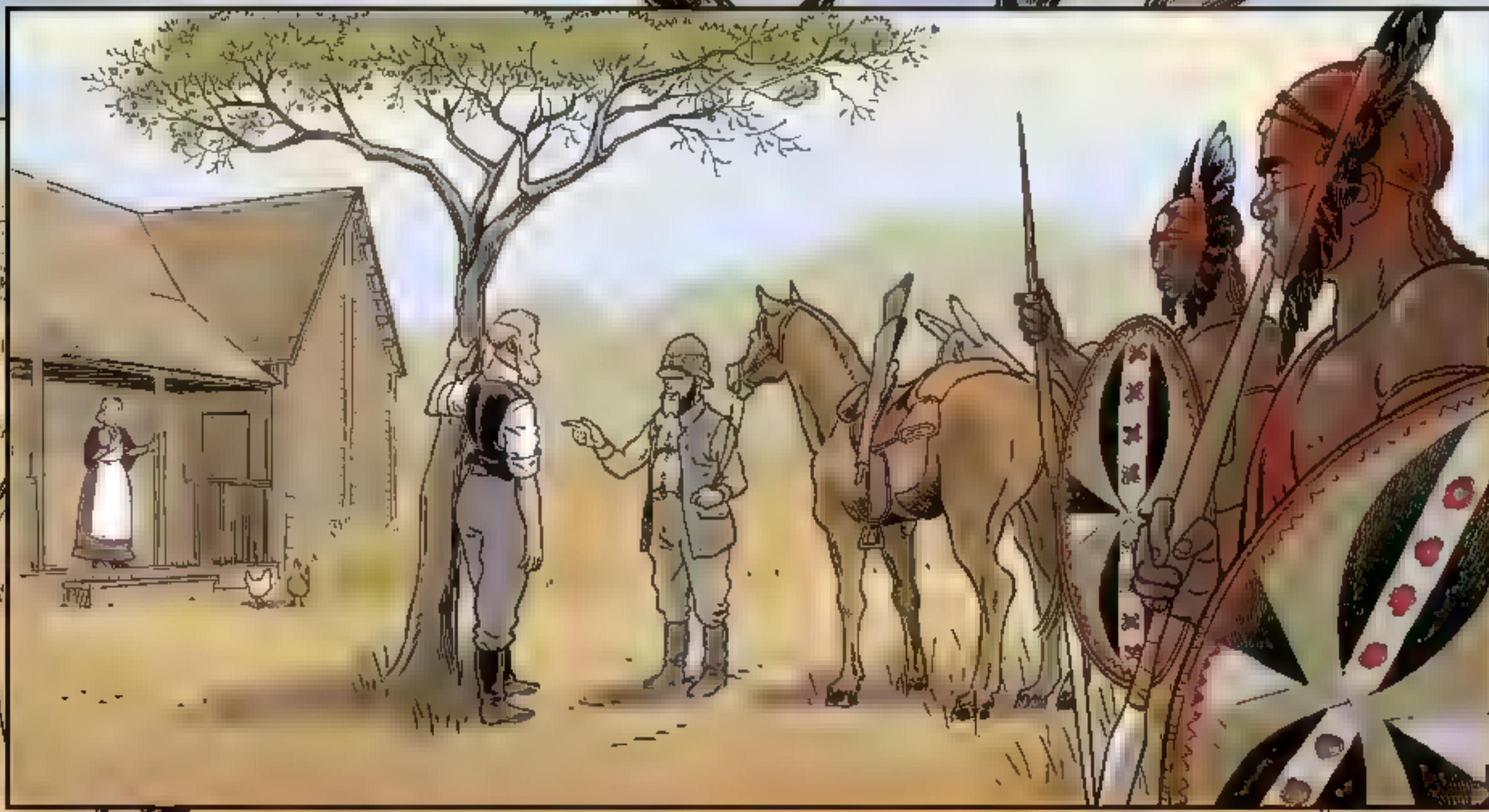
THEY COULDN'T HAVE BEEN FAR
FROM TABORA WHEN UNCLE FRIEDRICH
CAME TO SEE US AT THE MISSION.

OUR ARMY IS
ADVANCING
TOWARD MOSHI...

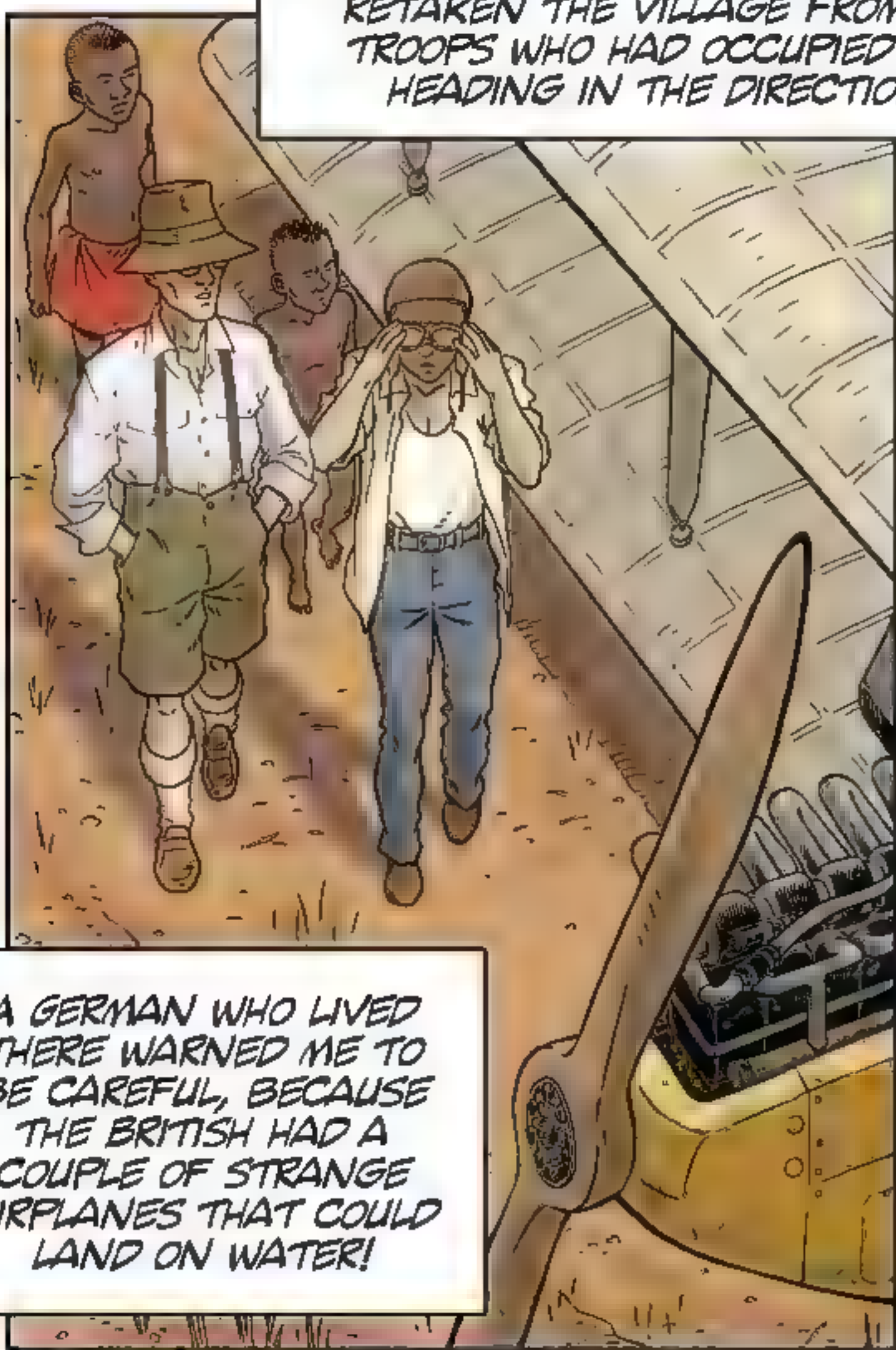
THEY'LL ALMOST
CERTAINLY BE
HEADING NORTH-EAST
BETWEEN LAKE EYASI
AND LAKE MANYARA...

I'LL LAND AT MKALAMA. THE VILLAGERS WILL
TELL ME IF GERMAN SOLDIERS HAVE BEEN THERE...

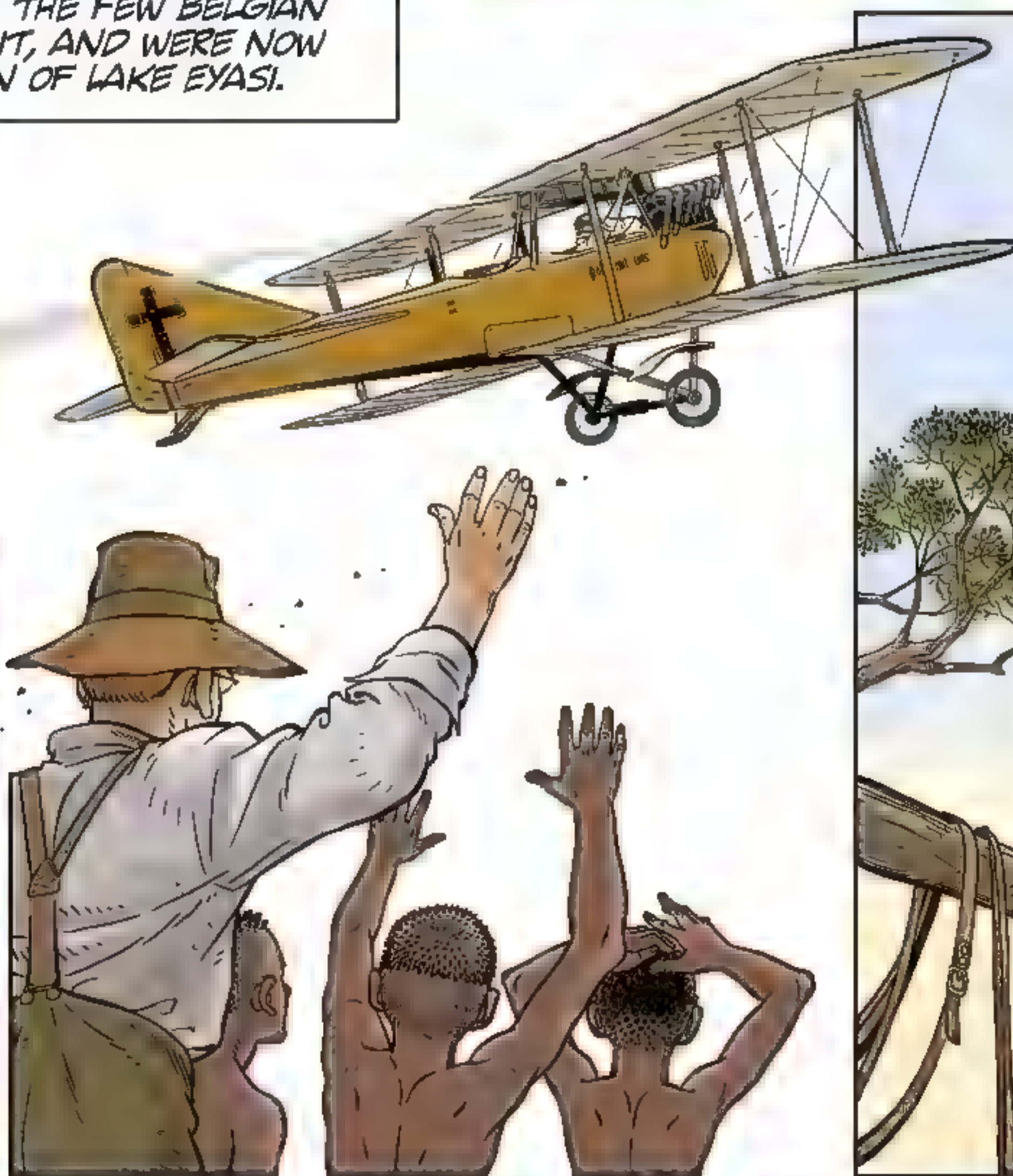
...UNLESS THEY'VE
ALREADY HEARD
WHAT I DID TO THE
BECKERS' PLACE!



I WAS RIGHT. CAPTAIN NEUMANN'S MEN HAD RETAKEN THE VILLAGE FROM THE FEW BELGIAN TROOPS WHO HAD OCCUPIED IT, AND WERE NOW HEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF LAKE EYASI.



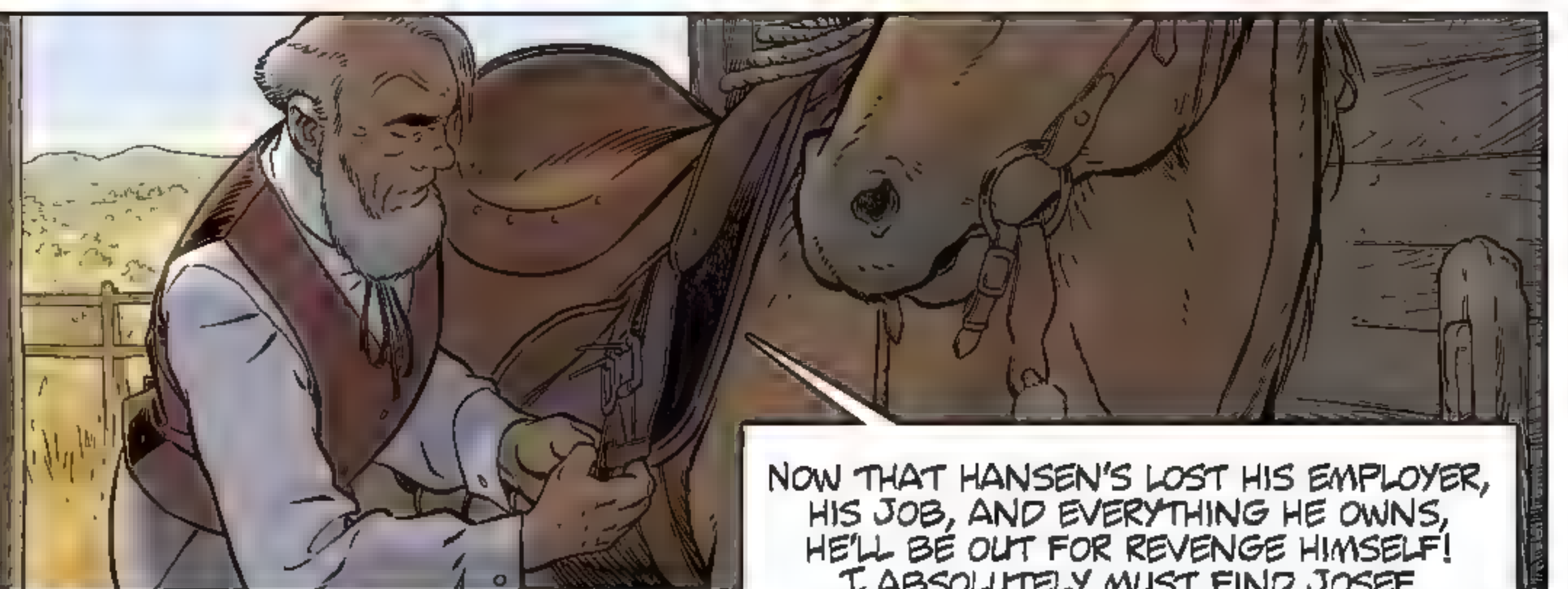
A GERMAN WHO LIVED THERE WARNED ME TO BE CAREFUL, BECAUSE THE BRITISH HAD A COUPLE OF STRANGE AIRPLANES THAT COULD LAND ON WATER!



BUT HOW? HOW COULD OUR OWN SON HAVE DONE ANYTHING SO INSANE?

IT'S ALL MY FAULT, CONSTANCE! YOU WERE RIGHT...

...I SHOULD HAVE REPORTED KLAUS AND HANSEN TO THE BELGIAN AUTHORITIES.



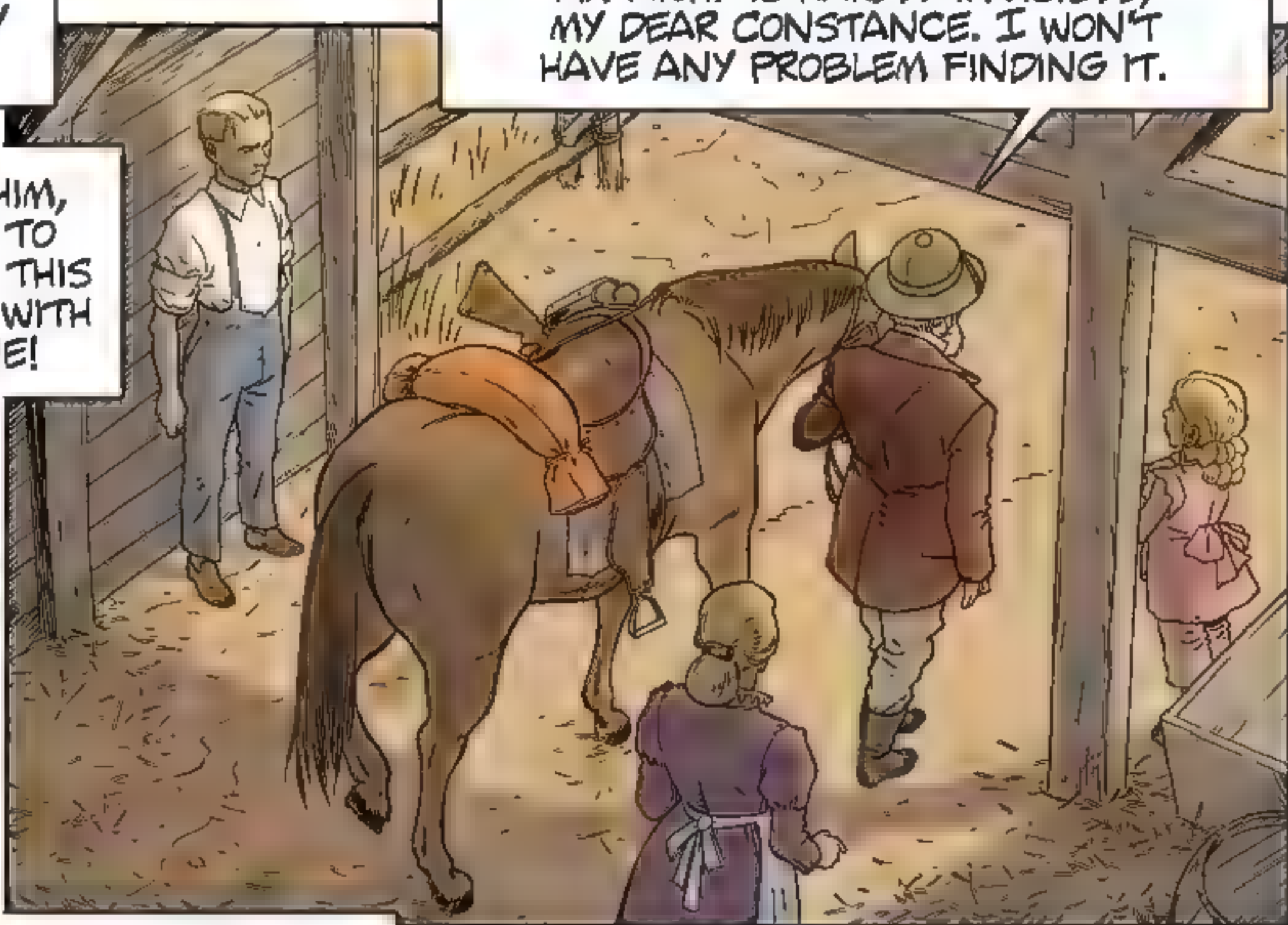
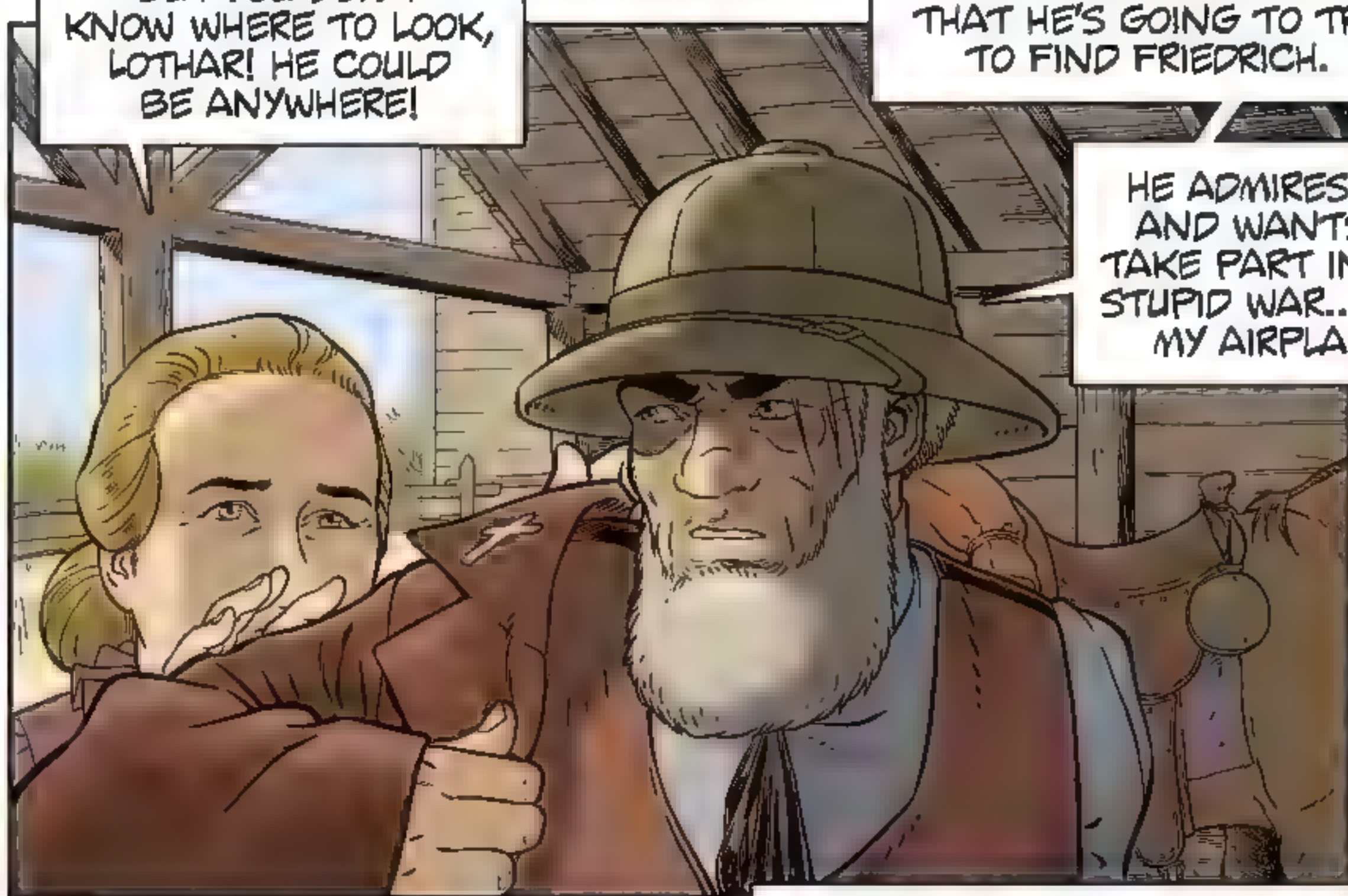
NOW THAT HANSEN'S LOST HIS EMPLOYER, HIS JOB, AND EVERYTHING HE OWNS, HE'LL BE OUT FOR REVENGE HIMSELF! I ABSOLUTELY MUST FIND JOSEF BEFORE THAT ANIMAL CATCHES UP WITH HIM AND HARMS HIM!

BUT YOU DON'T
KNOW WHERE TO LOOK,
LOTHARI! HE COULD
BE ANYWHERE!

IT'S PRETTY OBVIOUS
THAT HE'S GOING TO TRY
TO FIND FRIEDRICH.

AN ARMY IS HARDLY INVISIBLE,
MY DEAR CONSTANCE. I WON'T
HAVE ANY PROBLEM FINDING IT.

HE ADMIRES HIM,
AND WANTS TO
TAKE PART IN THIS
STUPID WAR... WITH
MY AIRPLANE!



DID YOU PACK EVERYTHING WE NEED, FRITZ?



YES, PASTOR, SIR.
CARTRIDGES AND ENOUGH
FOOD FOR TEN DAYS.

THEN LET'S GO!



BRING OUR SON
HOME SAFE,
LOTHARI!
I BEG YOU!



HAHA!
SO I WAS
RIGHT!

THE PASTOR KNOWS WHERE HIS BRAT'S HIDING...



I JUST HAVE
TO FOLLOW
HIM.

KOUSSÉ!
THE WHITE
MAN'S ON
HIS WAY!

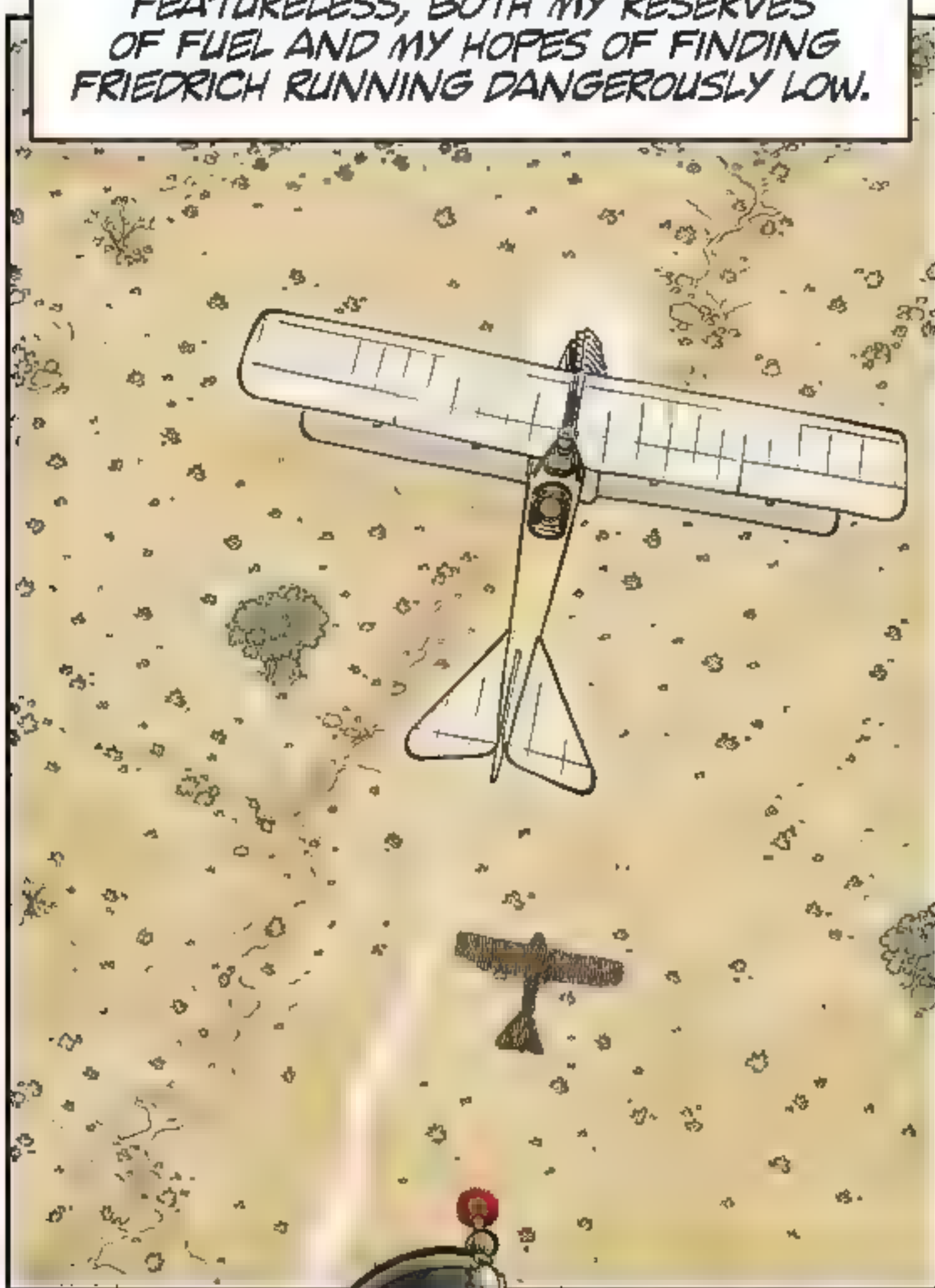
YOU'RE TO FOLLOW HIM AT A SAFE DISTANCE, LEAVING
MARKERS BEHIND YOU, LIKE WE SAID. I'LL KEEP
WELL BACK, SO HE DOESN'T HEAR MY HORSES.



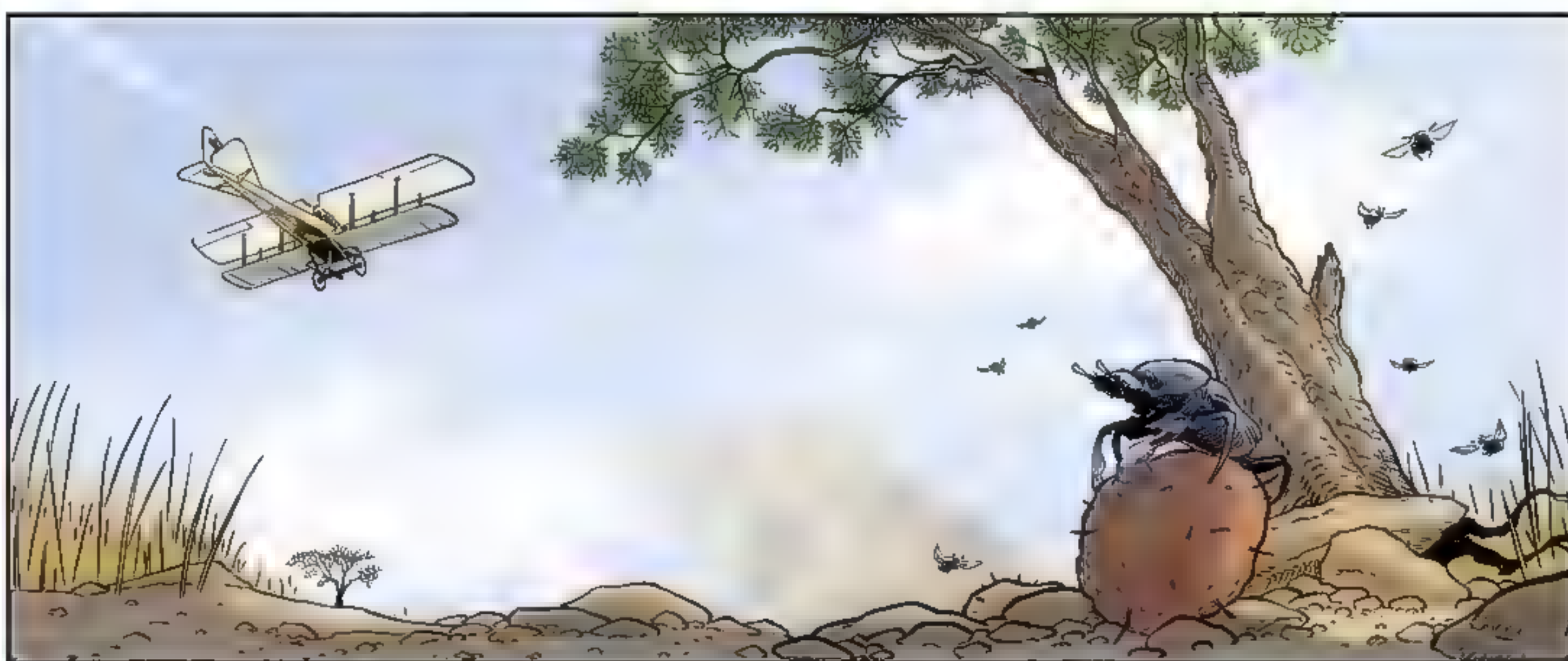
UNDERSTAND, KOUSSÉ?

TSS'H TSS'H!

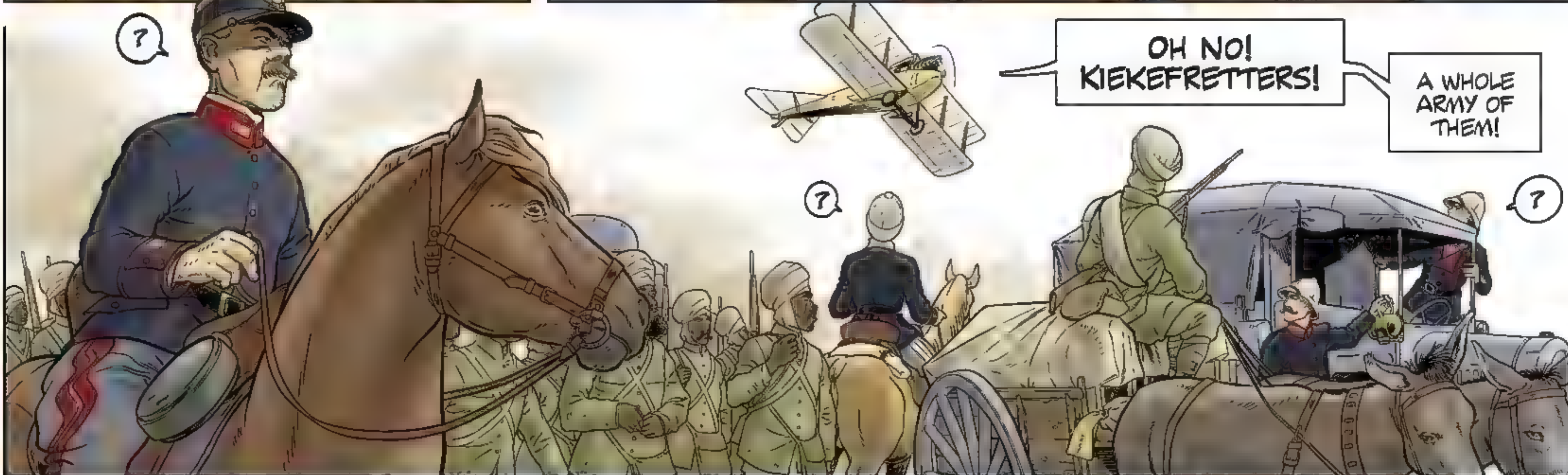
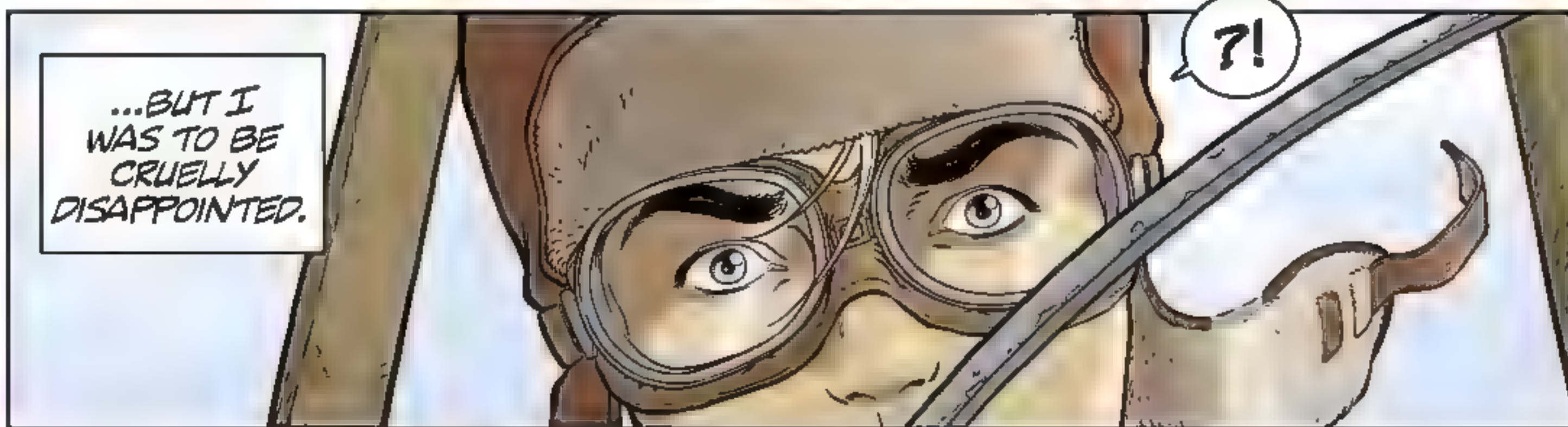
I WATCHED AS THE PLAINS ROLLED BY BENEATH ME, ENDLESS AND FEATURELESS, BOTH MY RESERVES OF FUEL AND MY HOPES OF FINDING FRIEDRICH RUNNING DANGEROUSLY LOW.



FINALLY, A CLOUD OF DUST, POSSIBLY STIRRED UP BY SOLDIERS ON THE MOVE, GAVE ME NEW HOPE. WITH MY HEART RACING, I HEADED TOWARD IT...



...BUT I WAS TO BE CRUELLY DISAPPOINTED.



OH NO! KIEKEFRETTERS!

A WHOLE ARMY OF THEM!

DAMN IT!

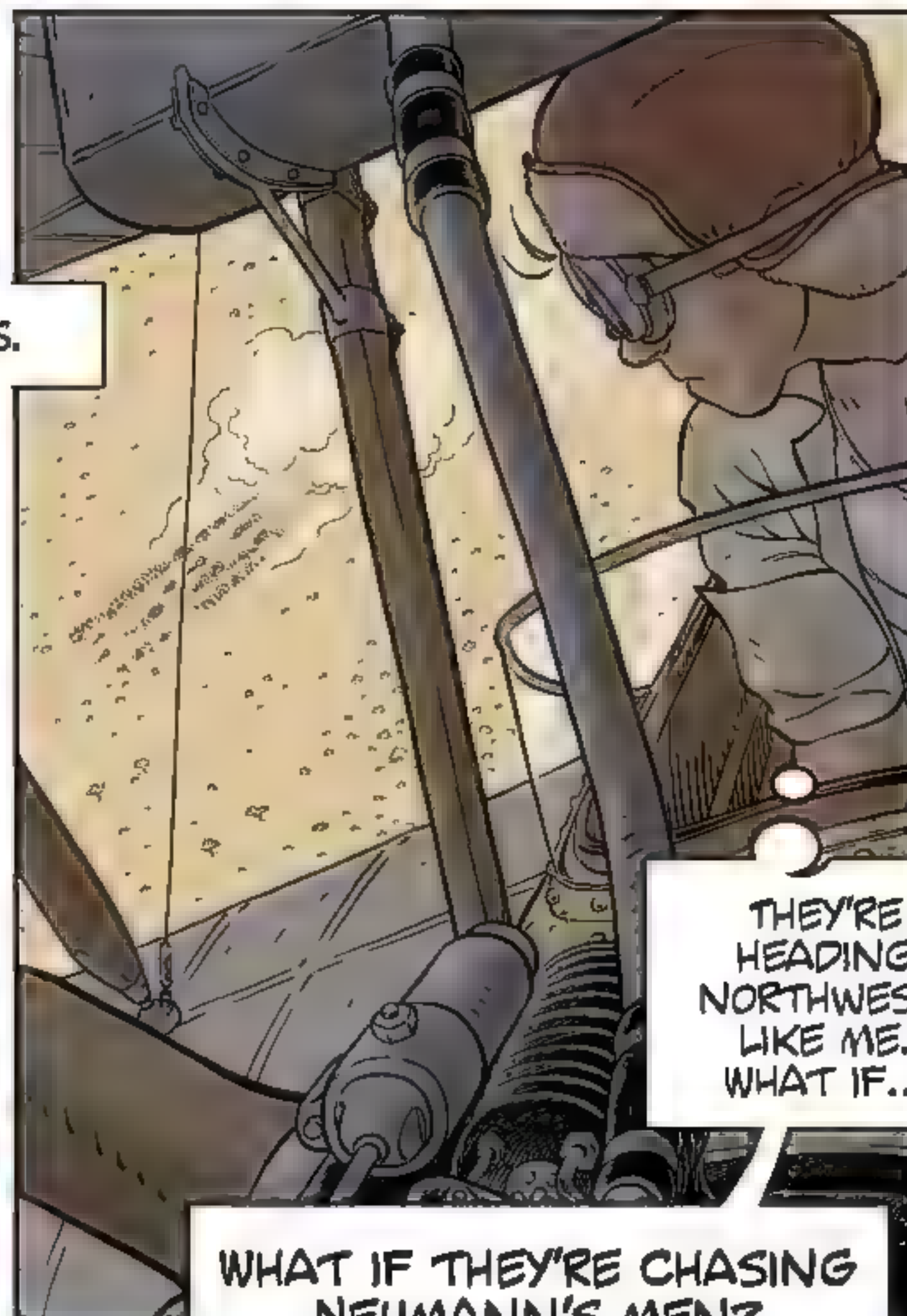


WHERE'D THAT BIRD COME FROM? IT'S NOT OURS... SHALL I GIVE THE ORDER TO SHOOT IT DOWN, SIR?

LOOKS LIKE SOME KIND OF CROSS ON IT... YES, IT'S THAT CRAZY PROTESTANT FLYING DOCTOR. LEAVE HIM BE, LIEUTENANT...



HE'S HARMLESS.

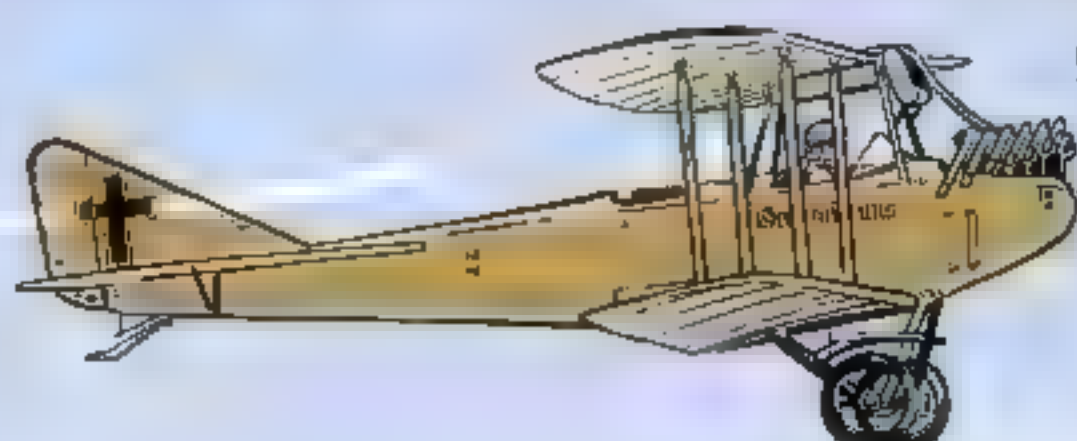


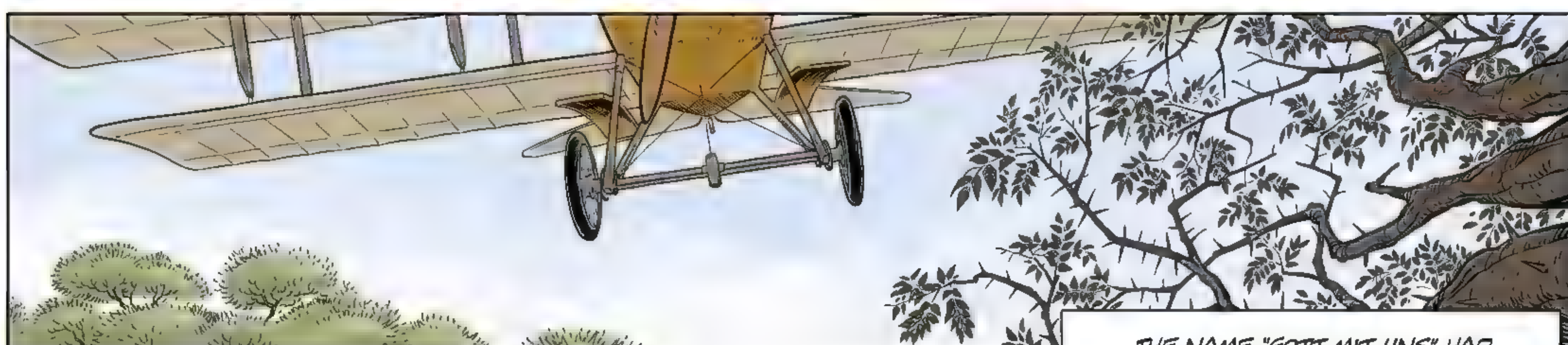
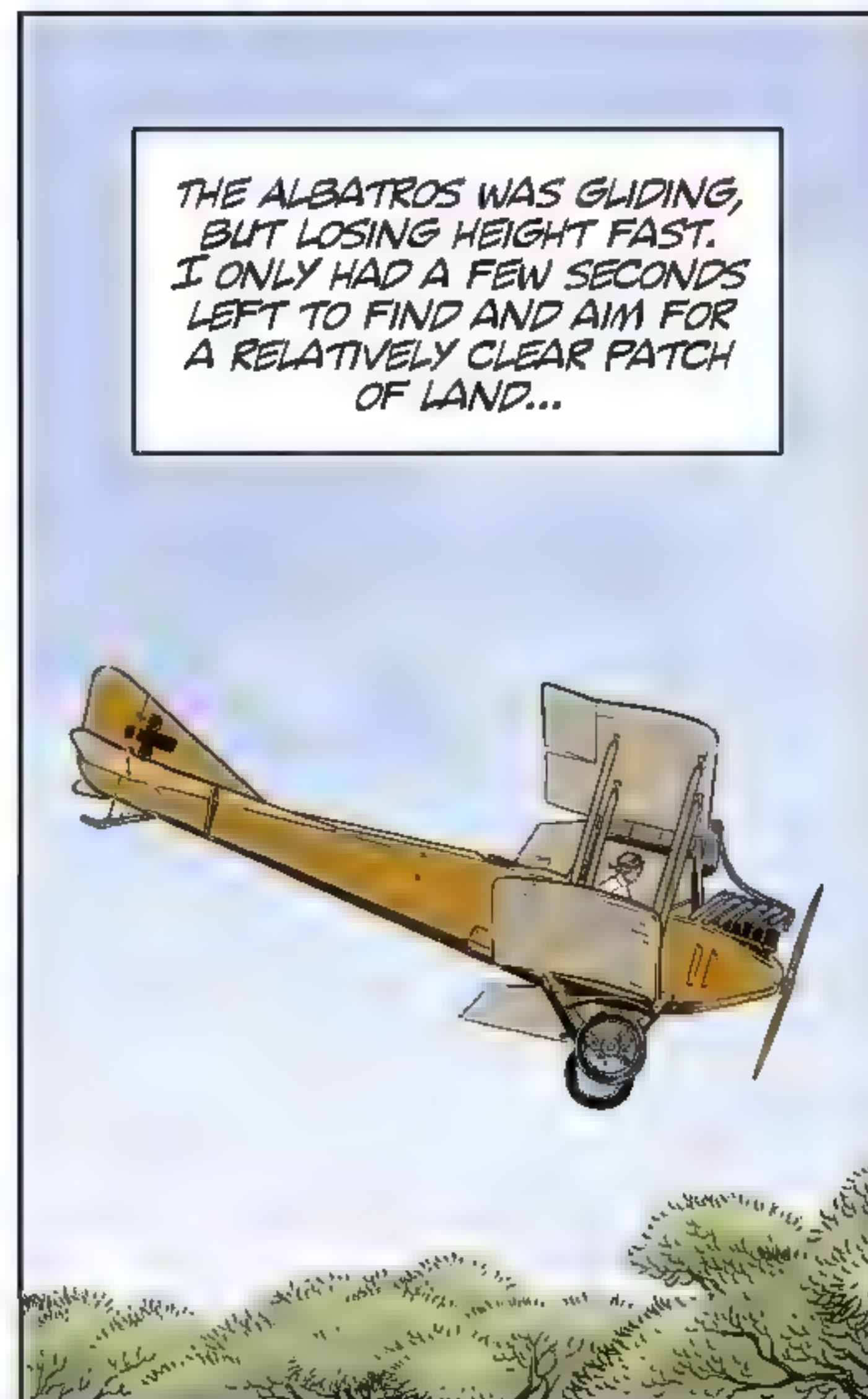
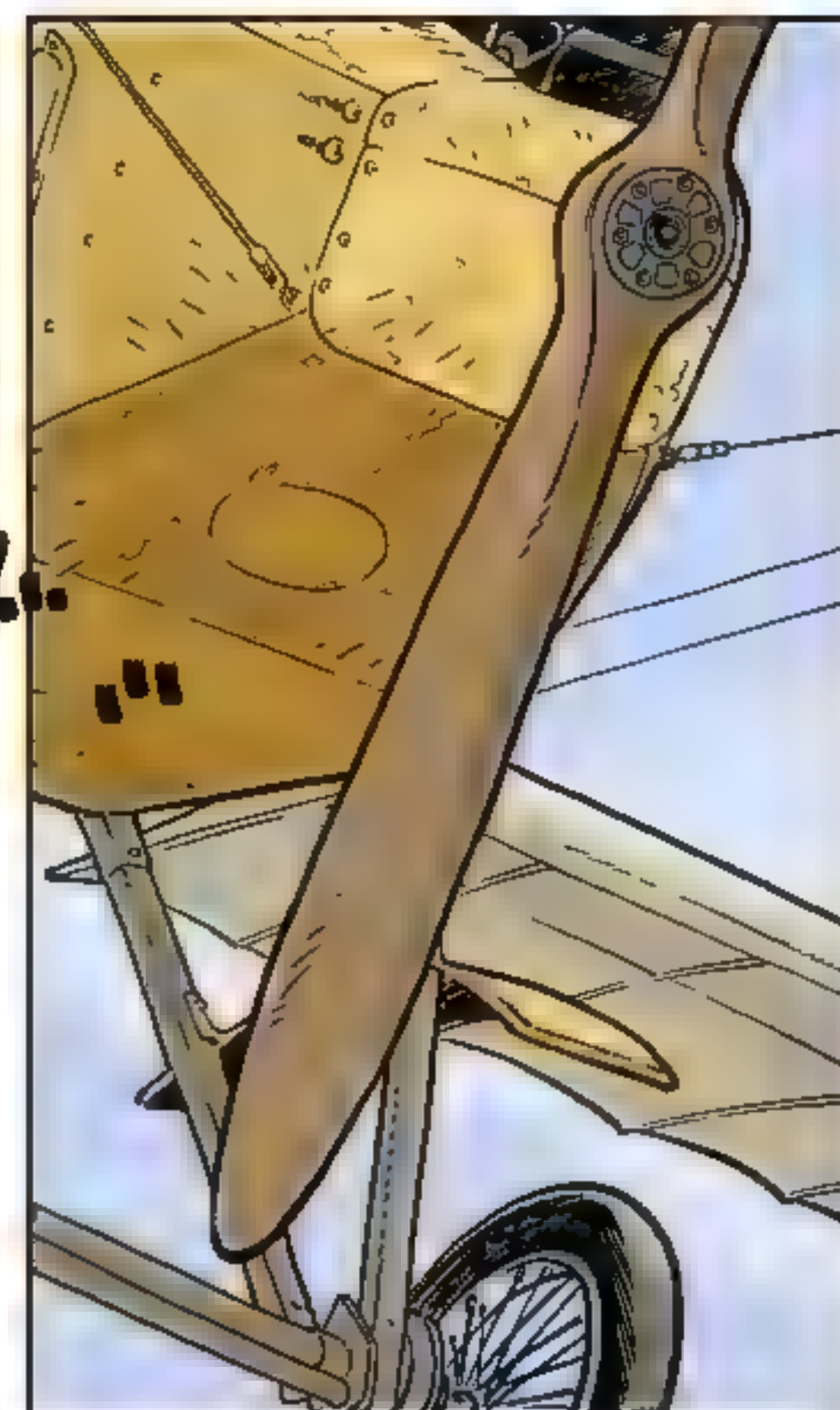
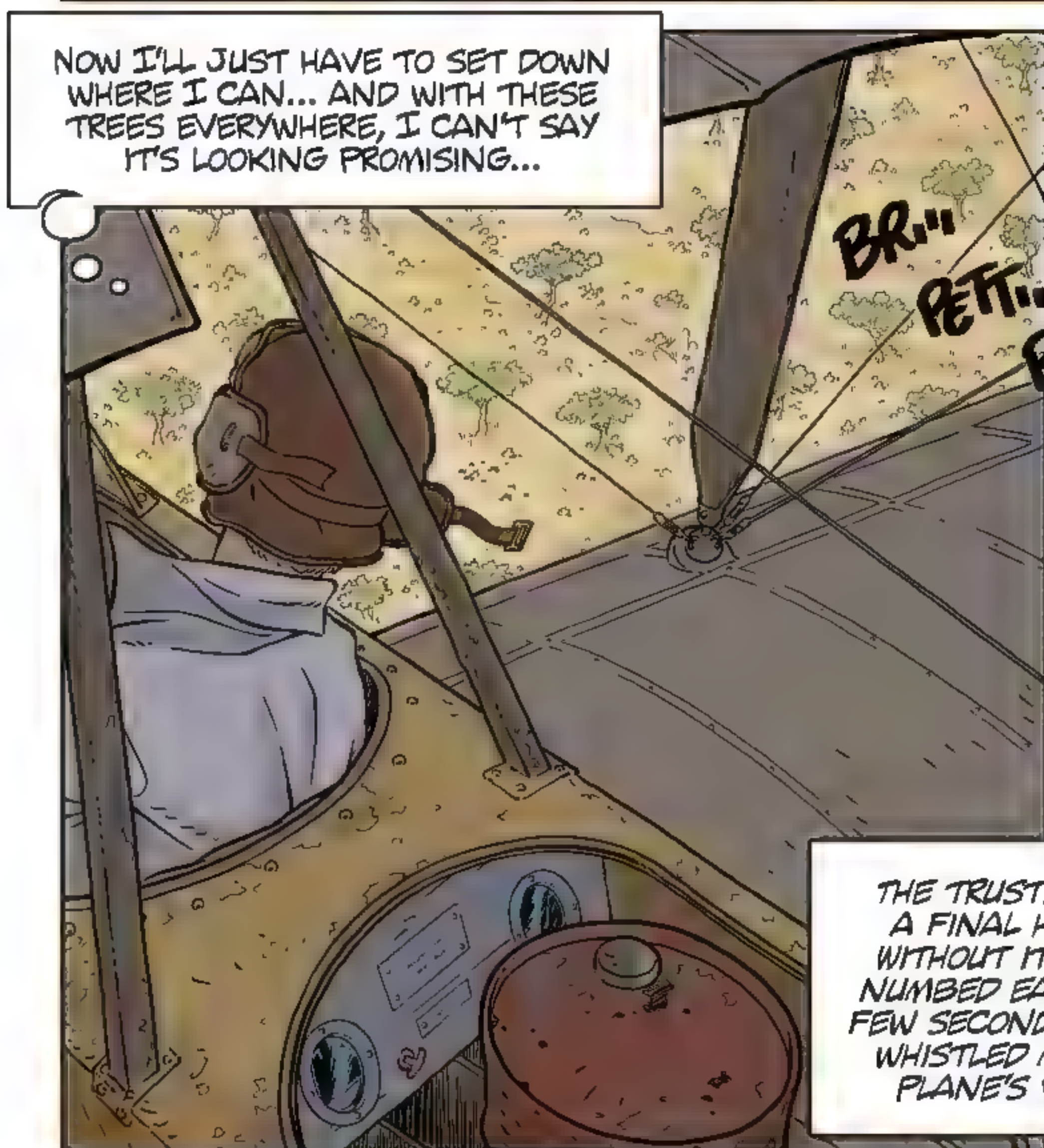
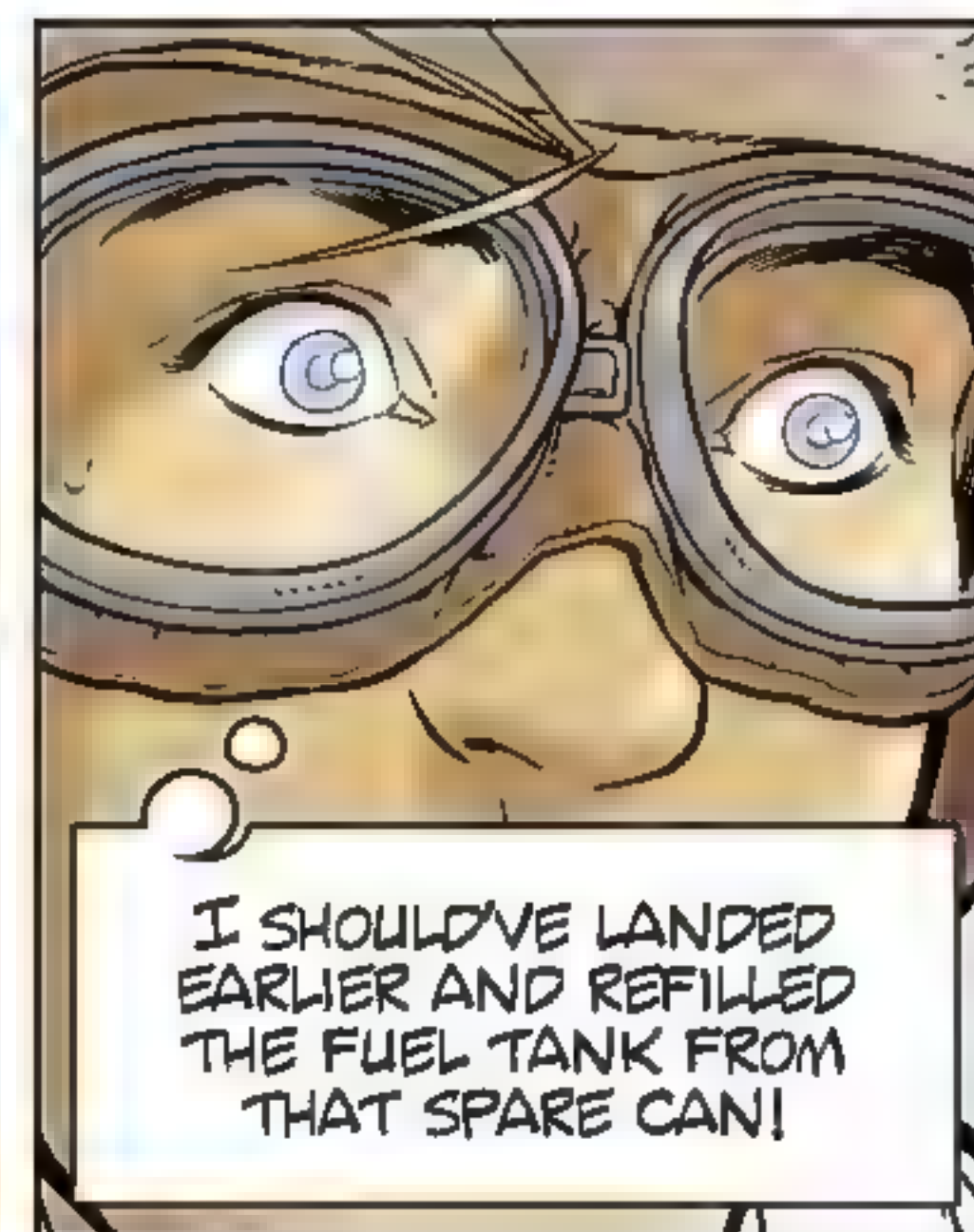
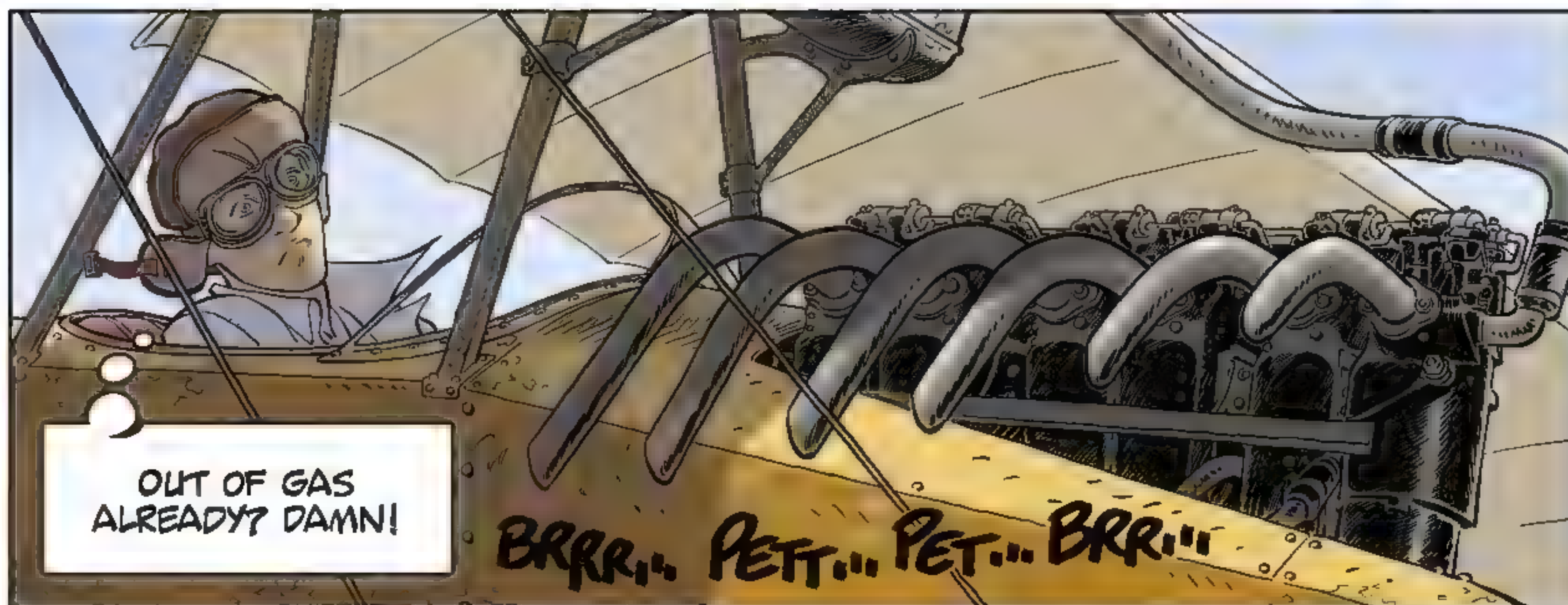
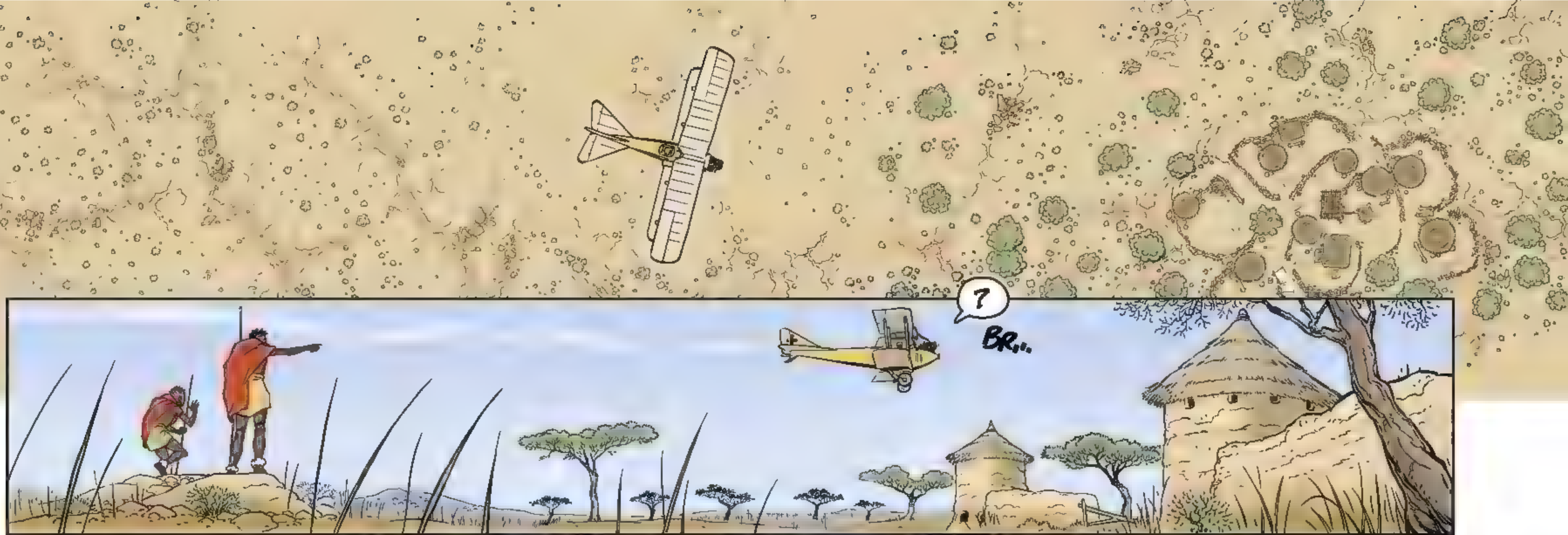
THEY'RE HEADING NORTHWEST, LIKE ME. WHAT IF...

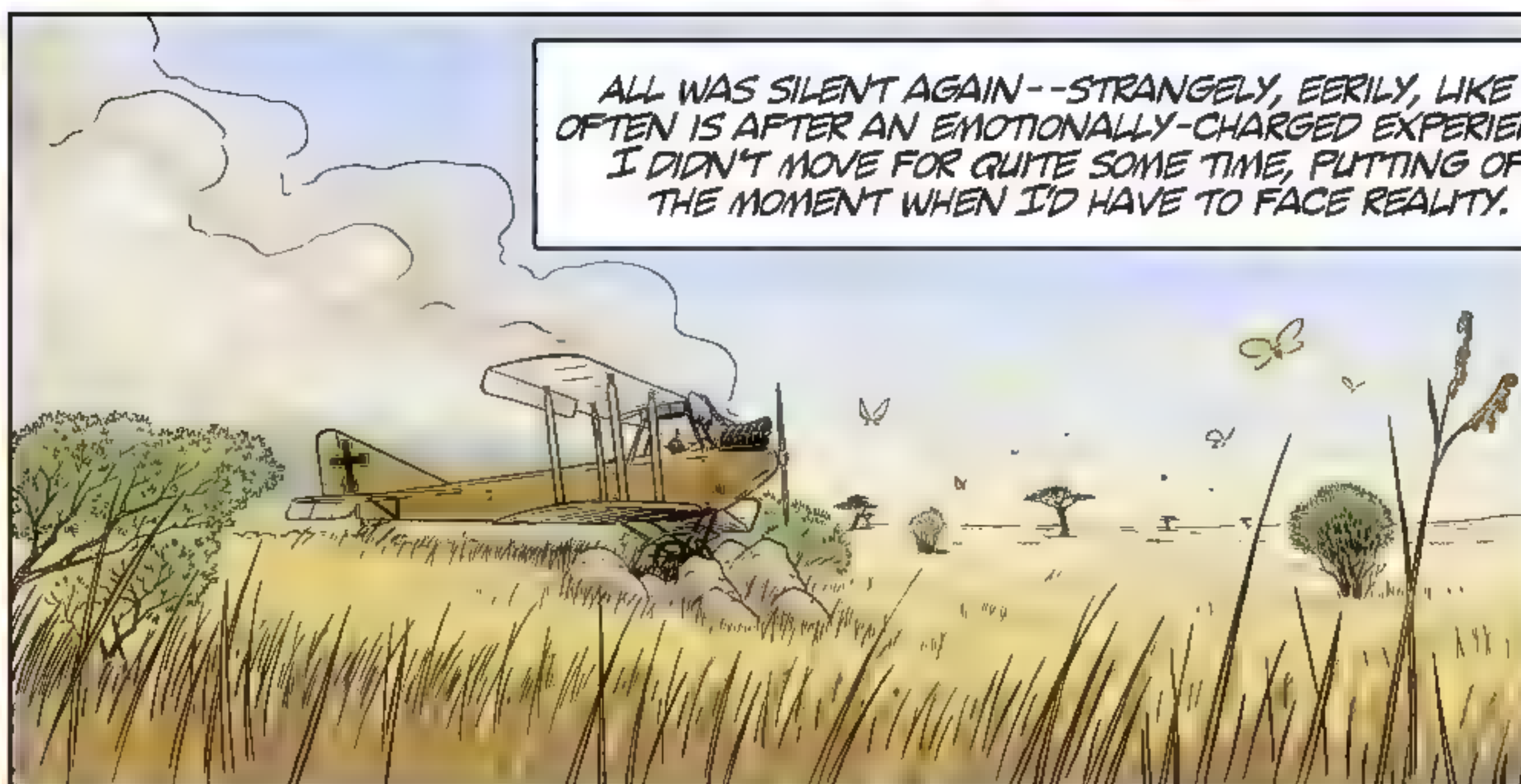
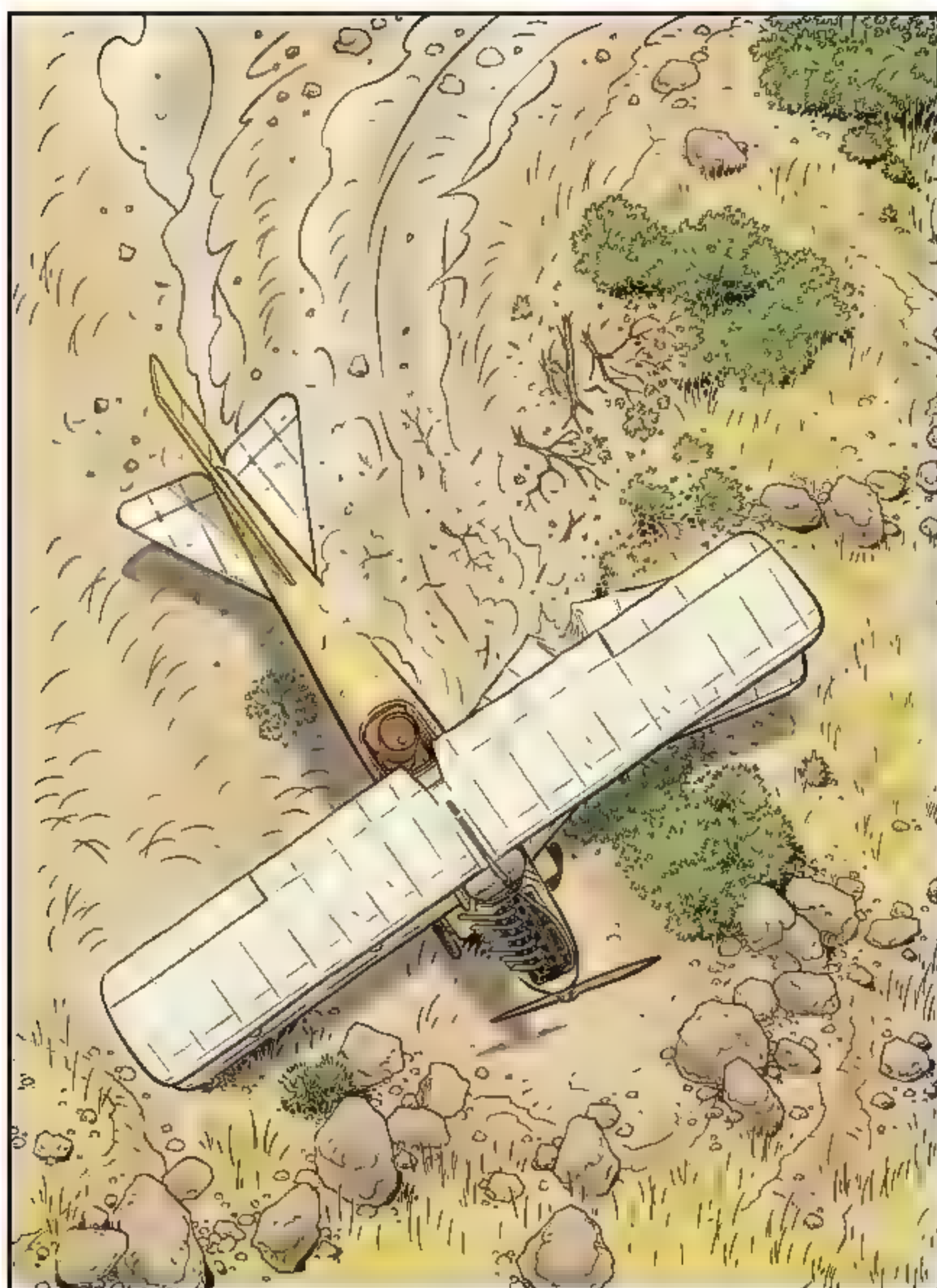
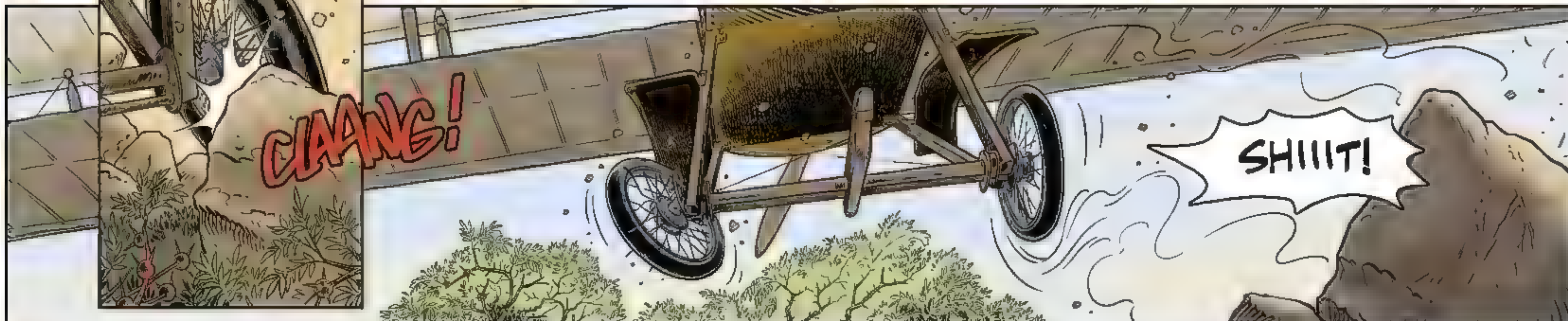
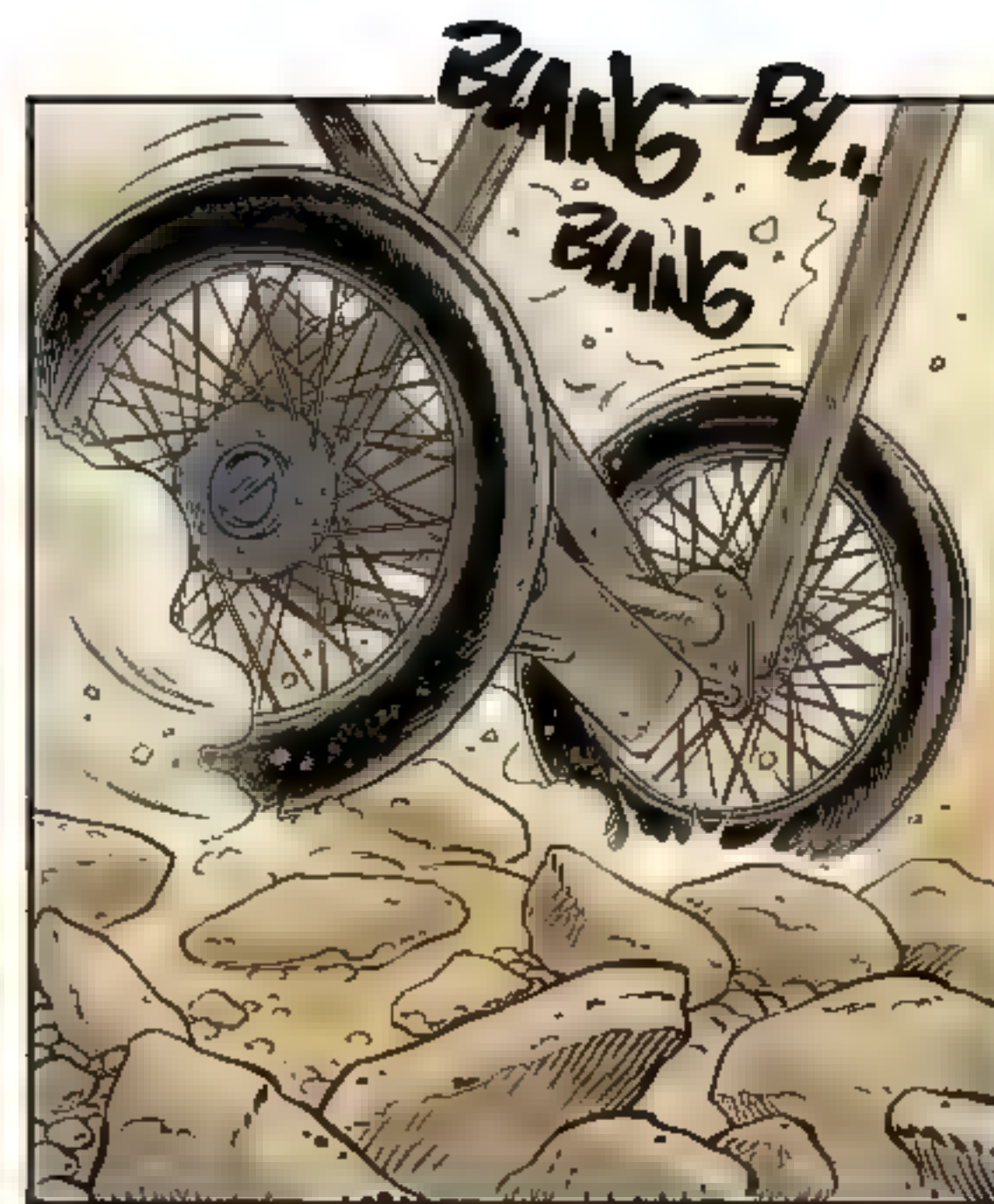
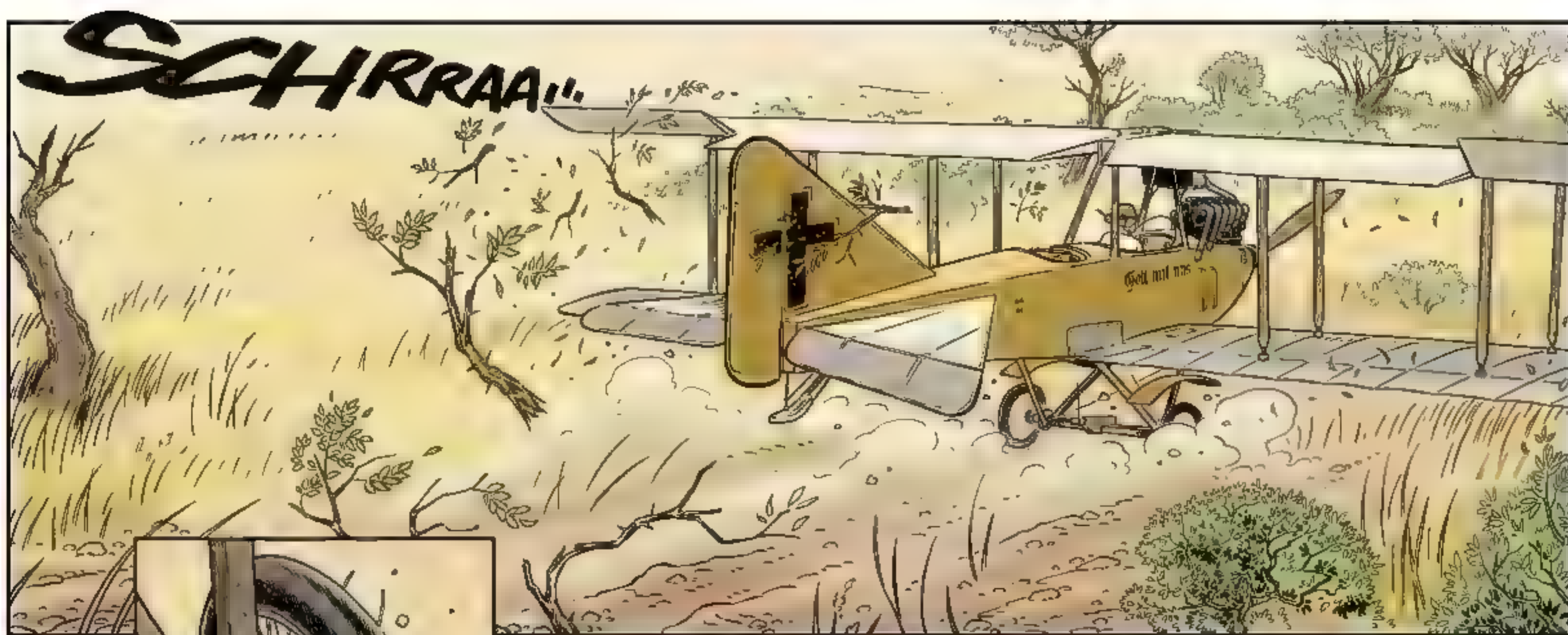
WHAT IF THEY'RE CHASING NEUMANN'S MEN?

AT LEAST IT WOULD MEAN I'M HEADING THE RIGHT WAY...

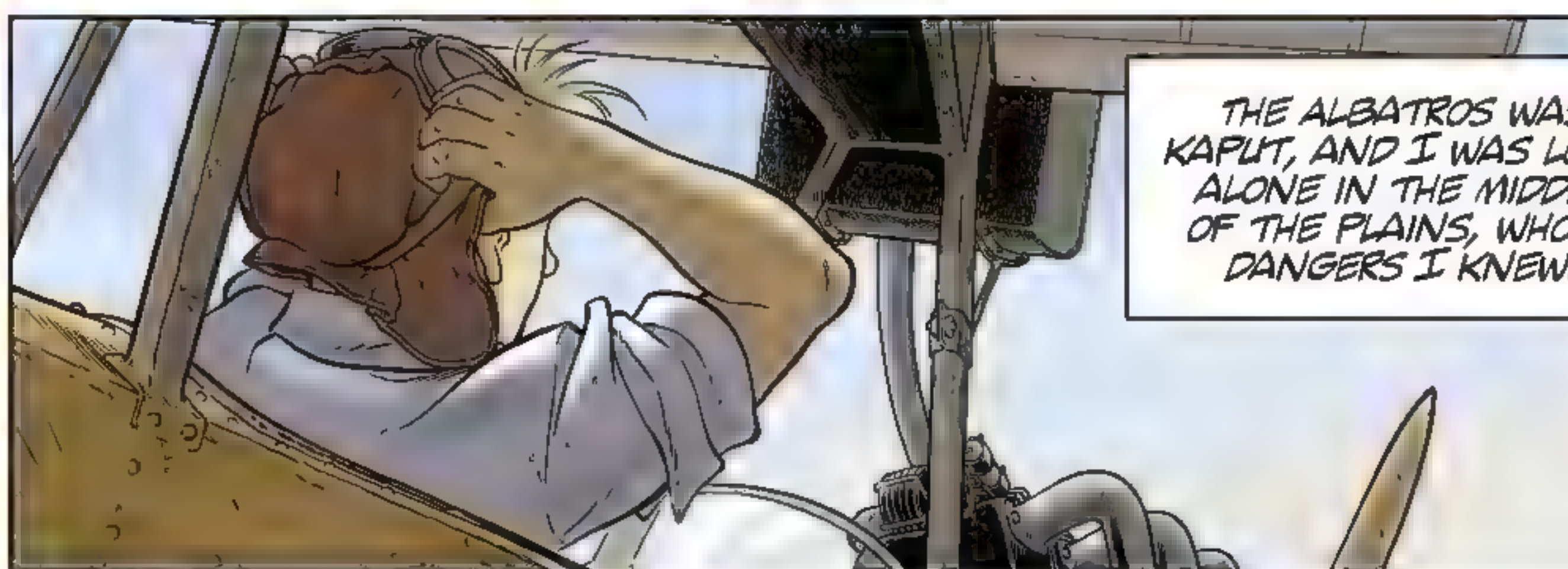
I'LL KEEP GOING. WE'LL SEE.



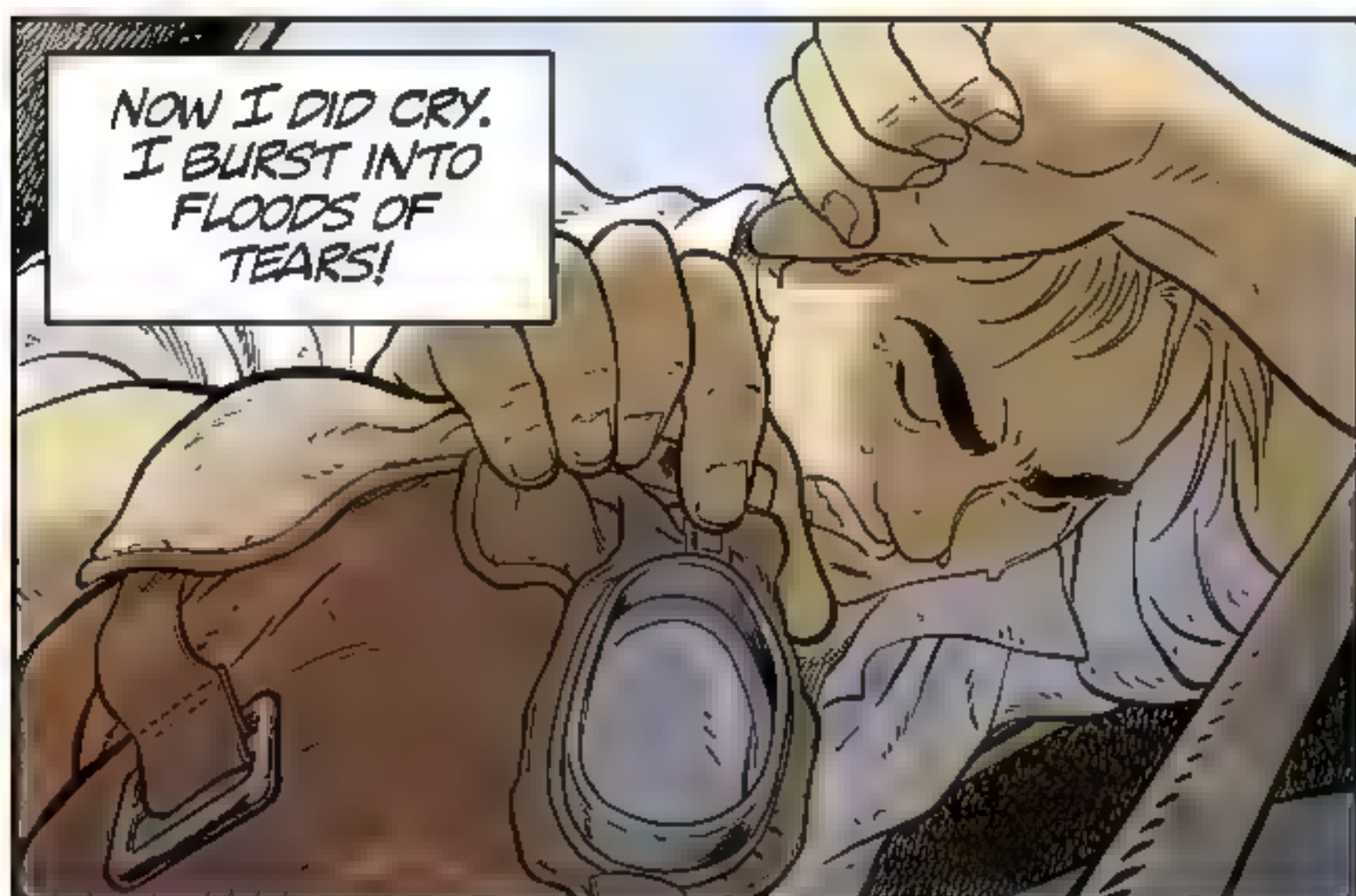




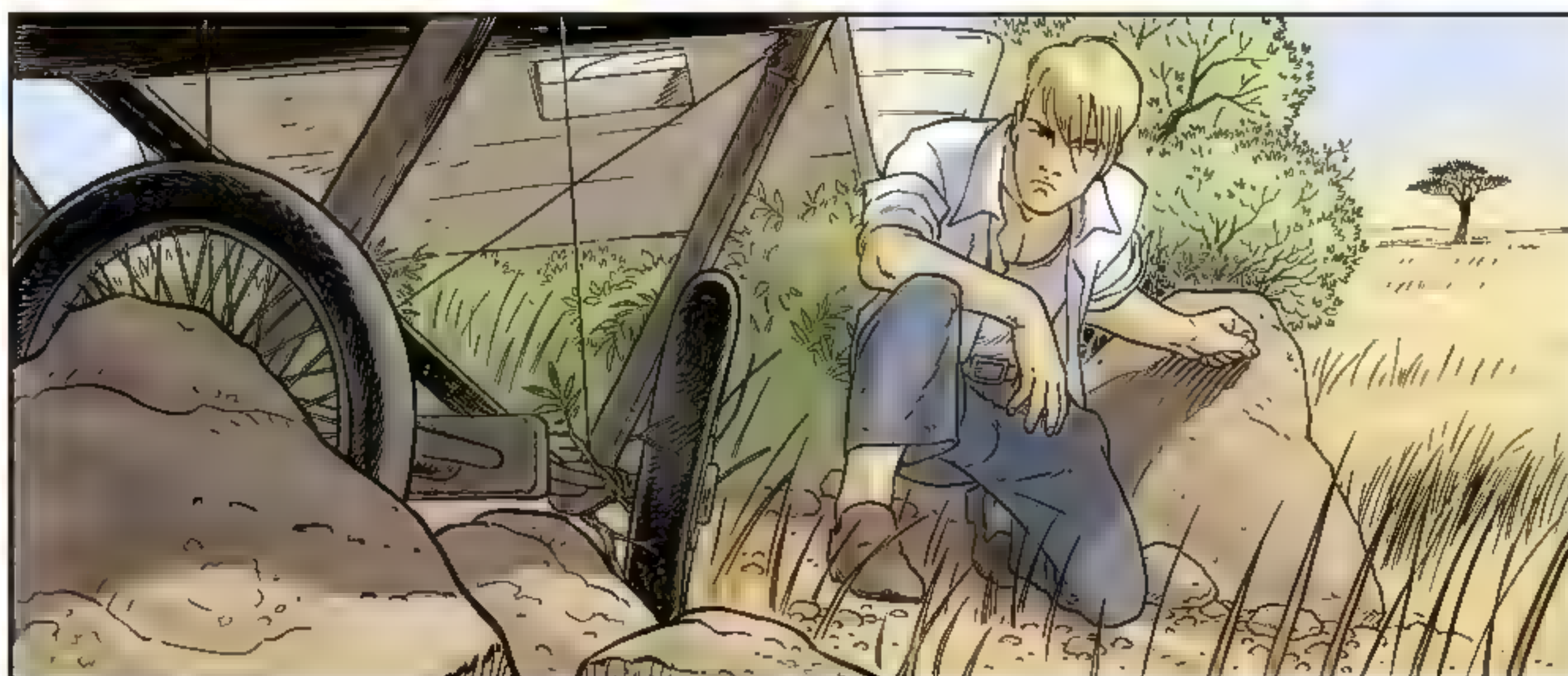
ALL WAS SILENT AGAIN--STRANGELY, EERILY, LIKE IT OFTEN IS AFTER AN EMOTIONALLY-CHARGED EXPERIENCE. I DIDN'T MOVE FOR QUITE SOME TIME, PUTTING OFF THE MOMENT WHEN I'D HAVE TO FACE REALITY.



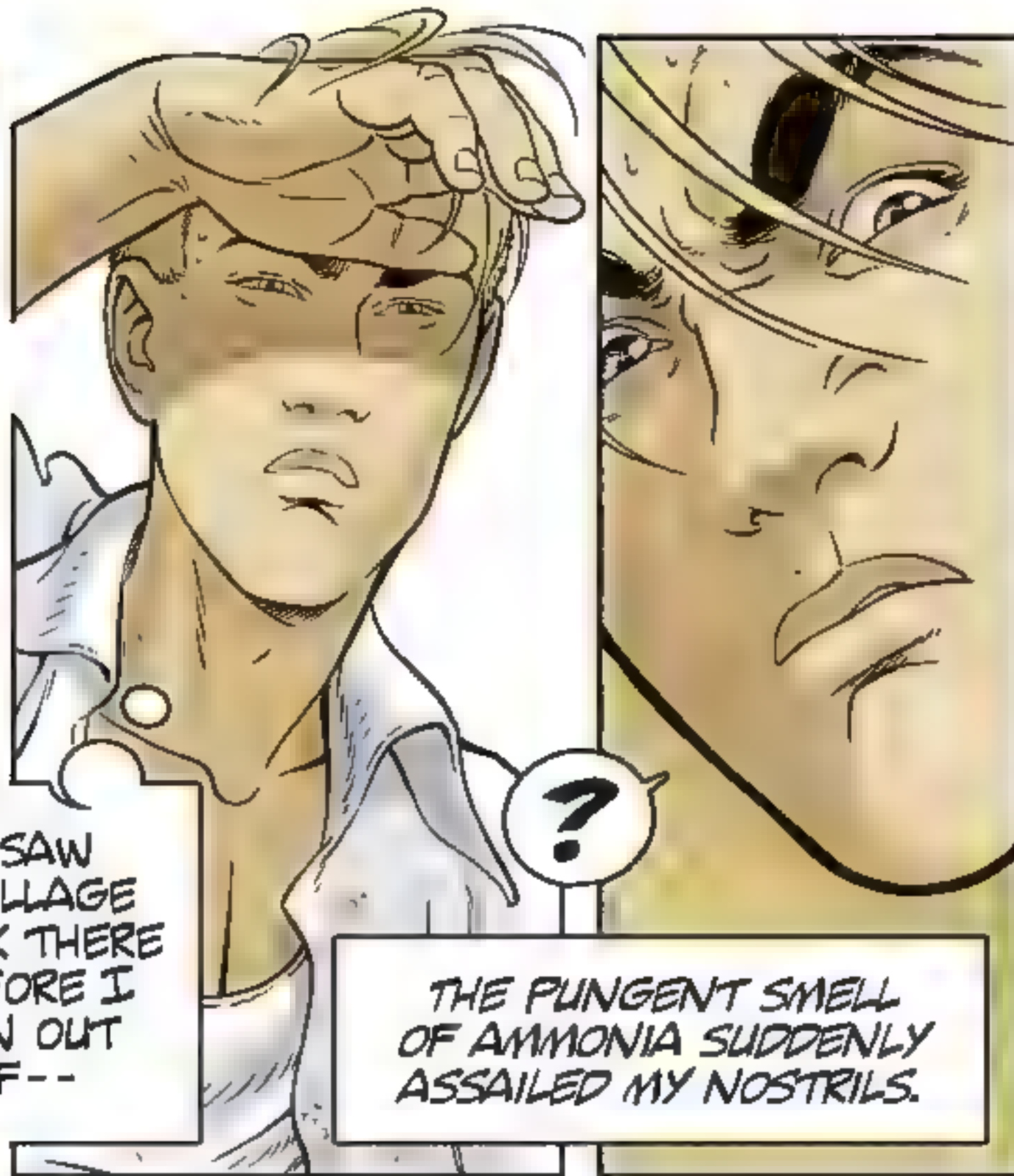
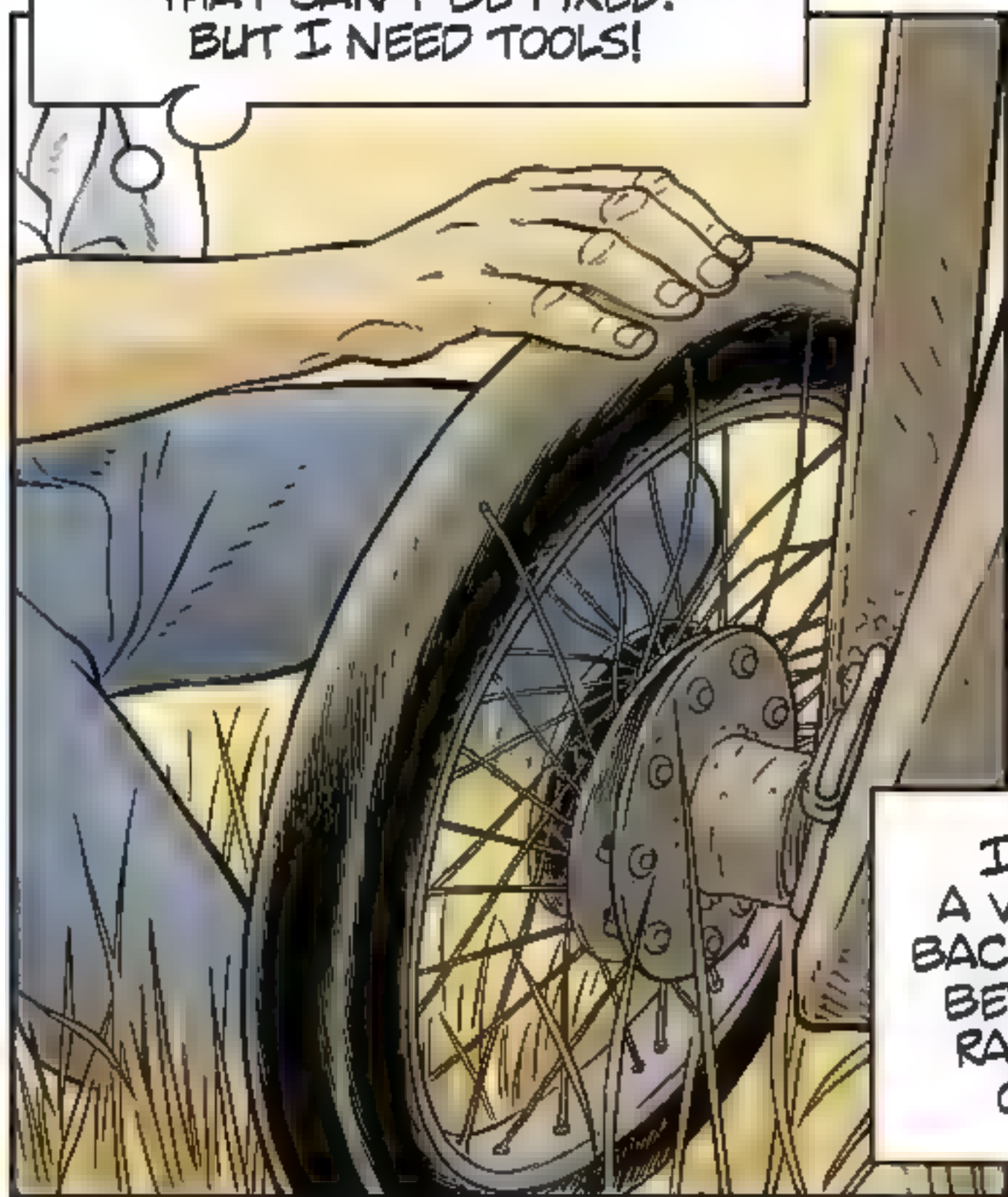
THE ALBATROS WAS KAPUT, AND I WAS LOST, ALONE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PLAINS, WHOSE DANGERS I KNEW.



NOW I DID CRY. I BURST INTO FLOODS OF TEARS!



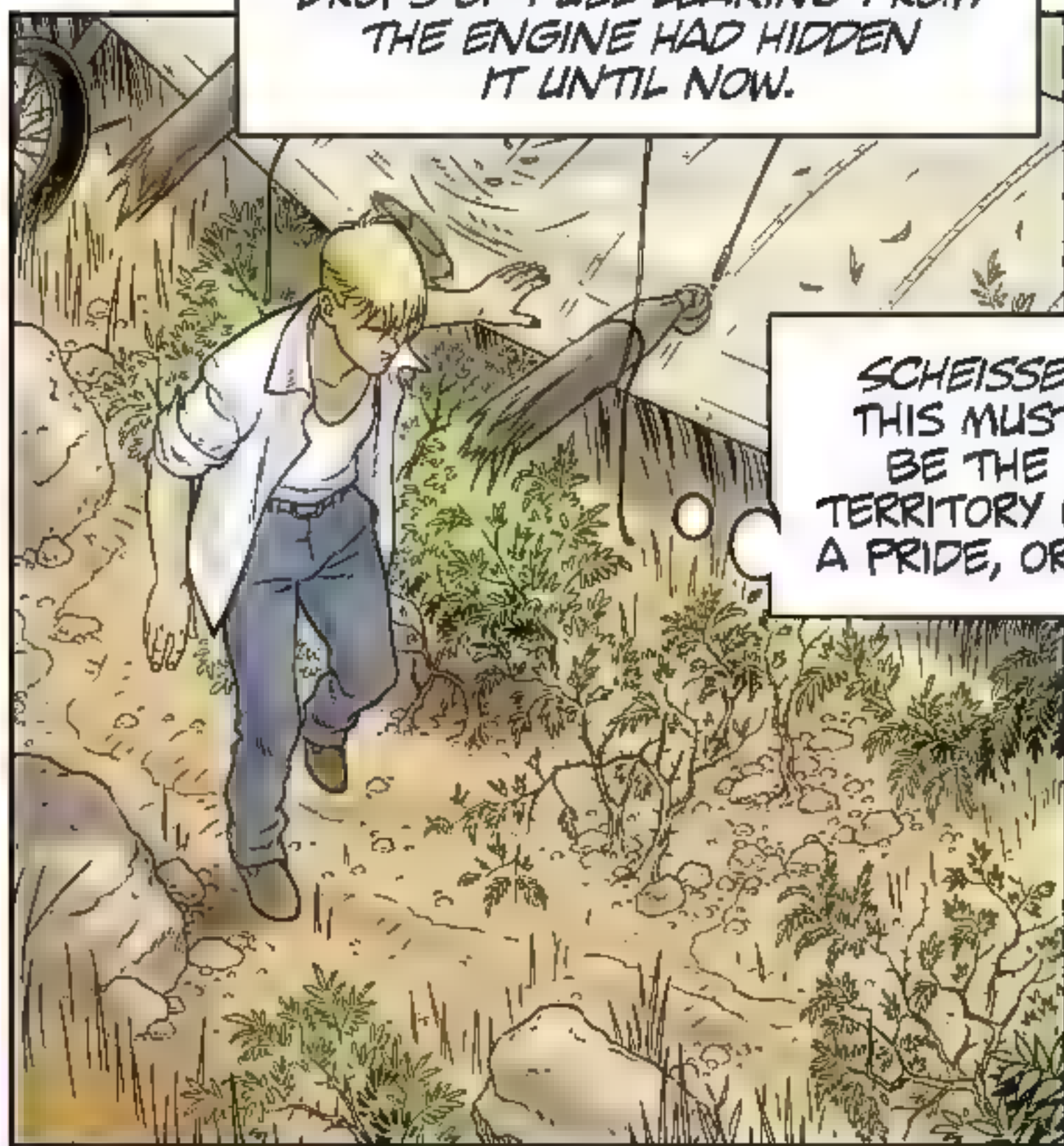
OK... A BROKEN WHEEL, SOME
WING DAMAGE... NOTHING
THAT CAN'T BE FIXED.
BUT I NEED TOOLS!



I SAW
A VILLAGE
BACK THERE
BEFORE I
RAN OUT
OF--

THE PUNGENT SMELL
OF AMMONIA SUDDENLY
ASSAILED MY NOSTRILS.

CAT URINE! THE BUSHES WERE
SATURATED WITH IT. THE LAST
DROPS OF FUEL LEAKING FROM
THE ENGINE HAD HIDDEN
IT UNTIL NOW.

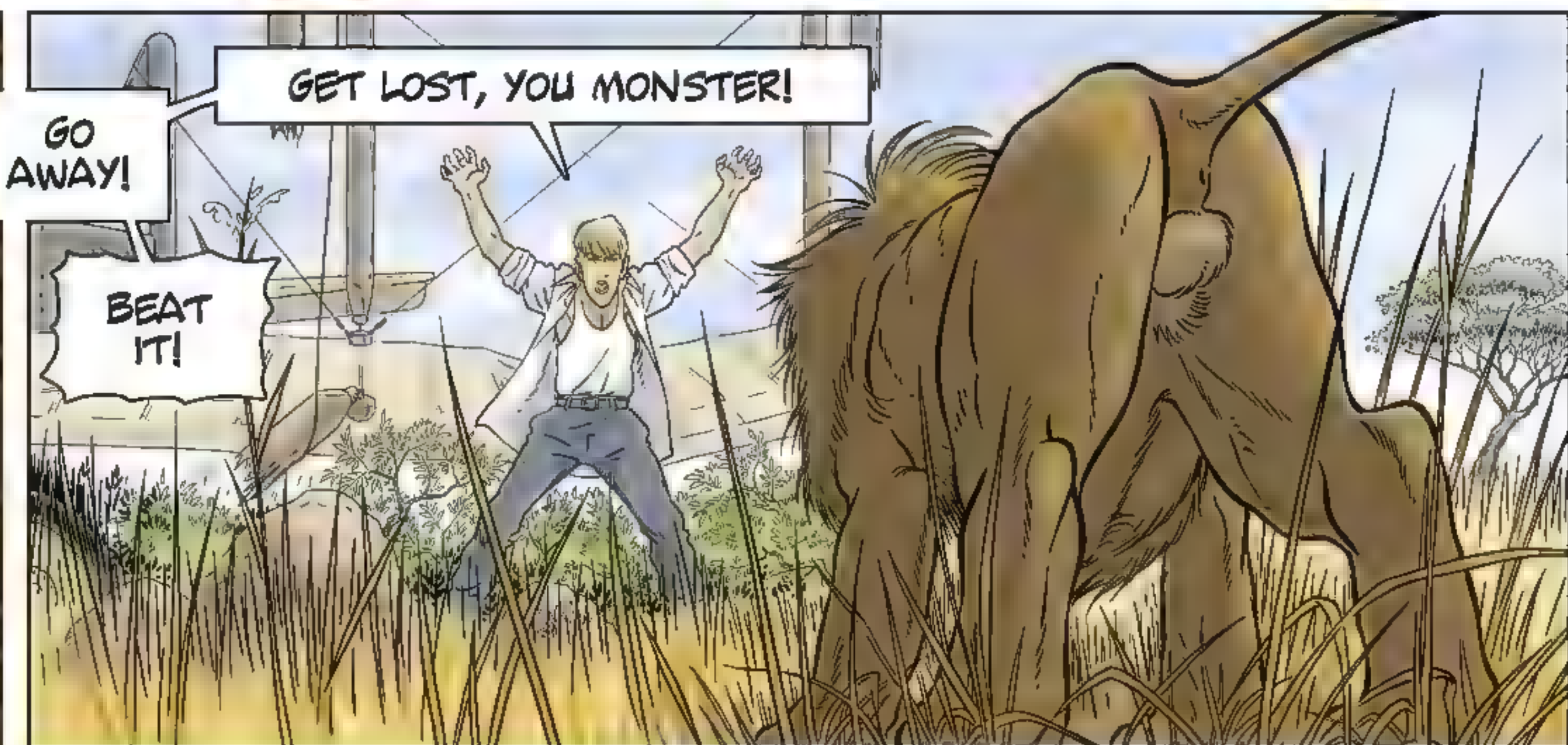


SCHIESS!
THIS MUST
BE THE
TERRITORY OF
A PRIDE, OR...



RRR
RRR

A MALE!

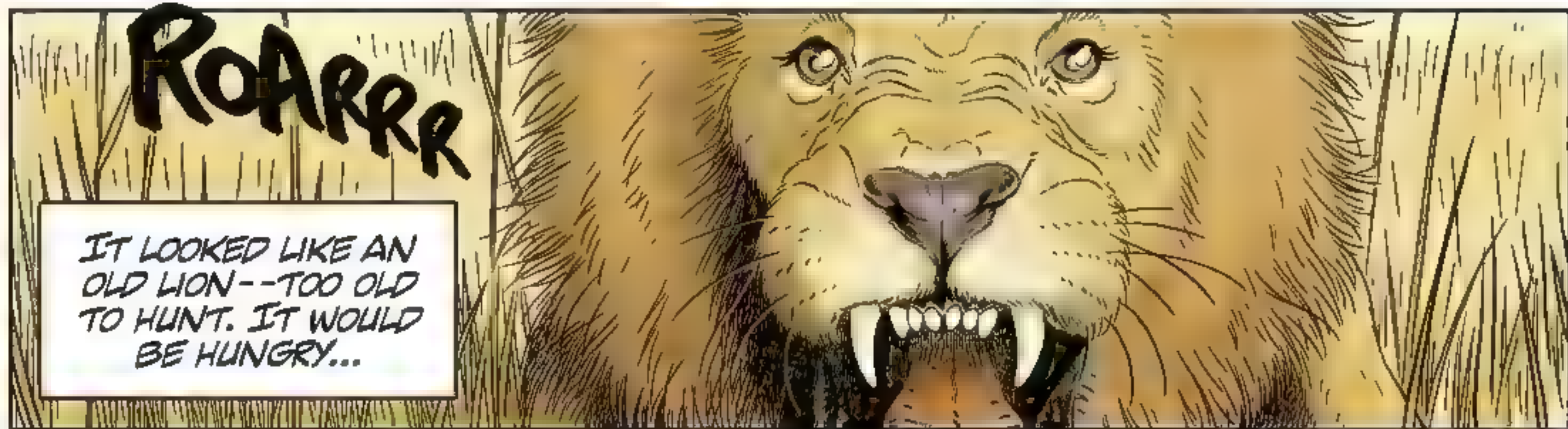


GO
AWAY!

GET LOST, YOU MONSTER!

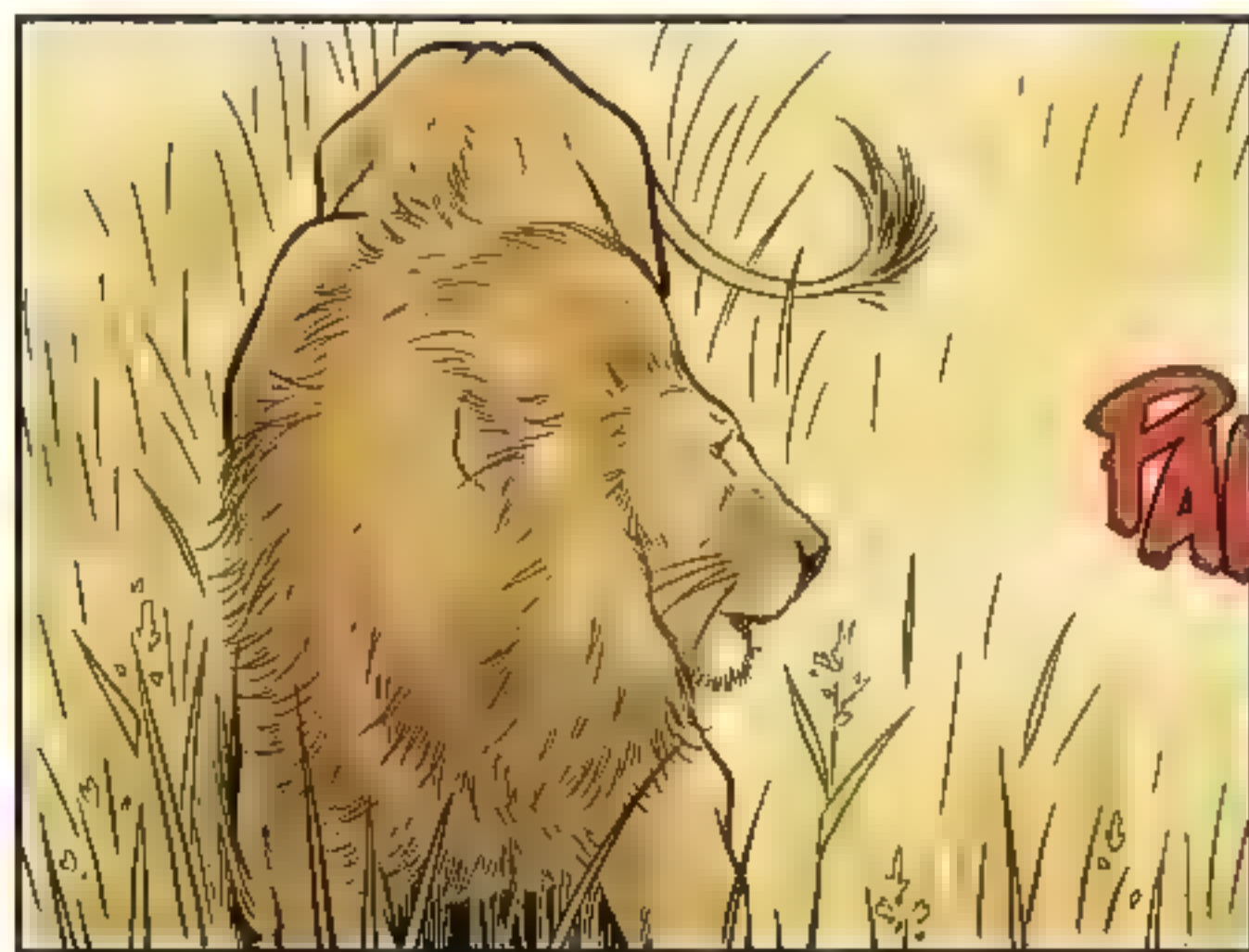
BEAT
IT!

IN THE BUSH, I'D ONCE SEEN MY FATHER FRIGHTEN OFF A LEOPARD BY SHOUTING AT IT.
BUT THE VOICE OF A SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD BOY WAS OBVIOUSLY NOT AS LOUD OR RESONANT
AS THE VOICE OF A GROWN MAN WHO WAS USED TO GIVING ORDERS...



ROARRR

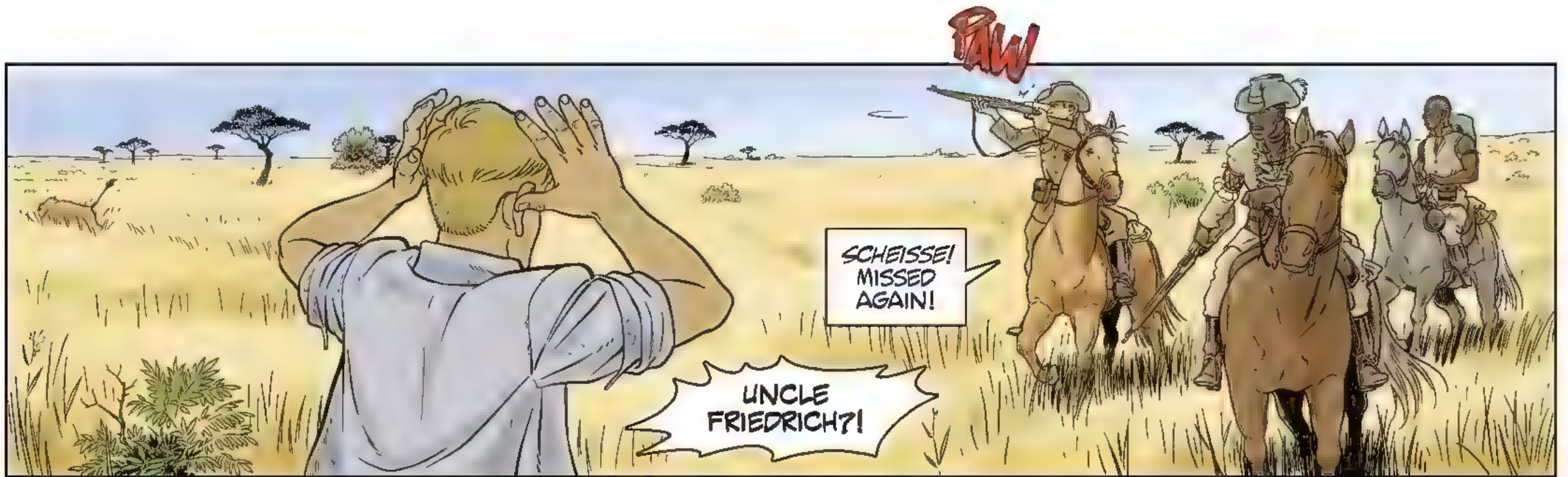
IT LOOKED LIKE AN
OLD LION--TOO OLD
TO HUNT. IT WOULD
BE HUNGRY...



PAW

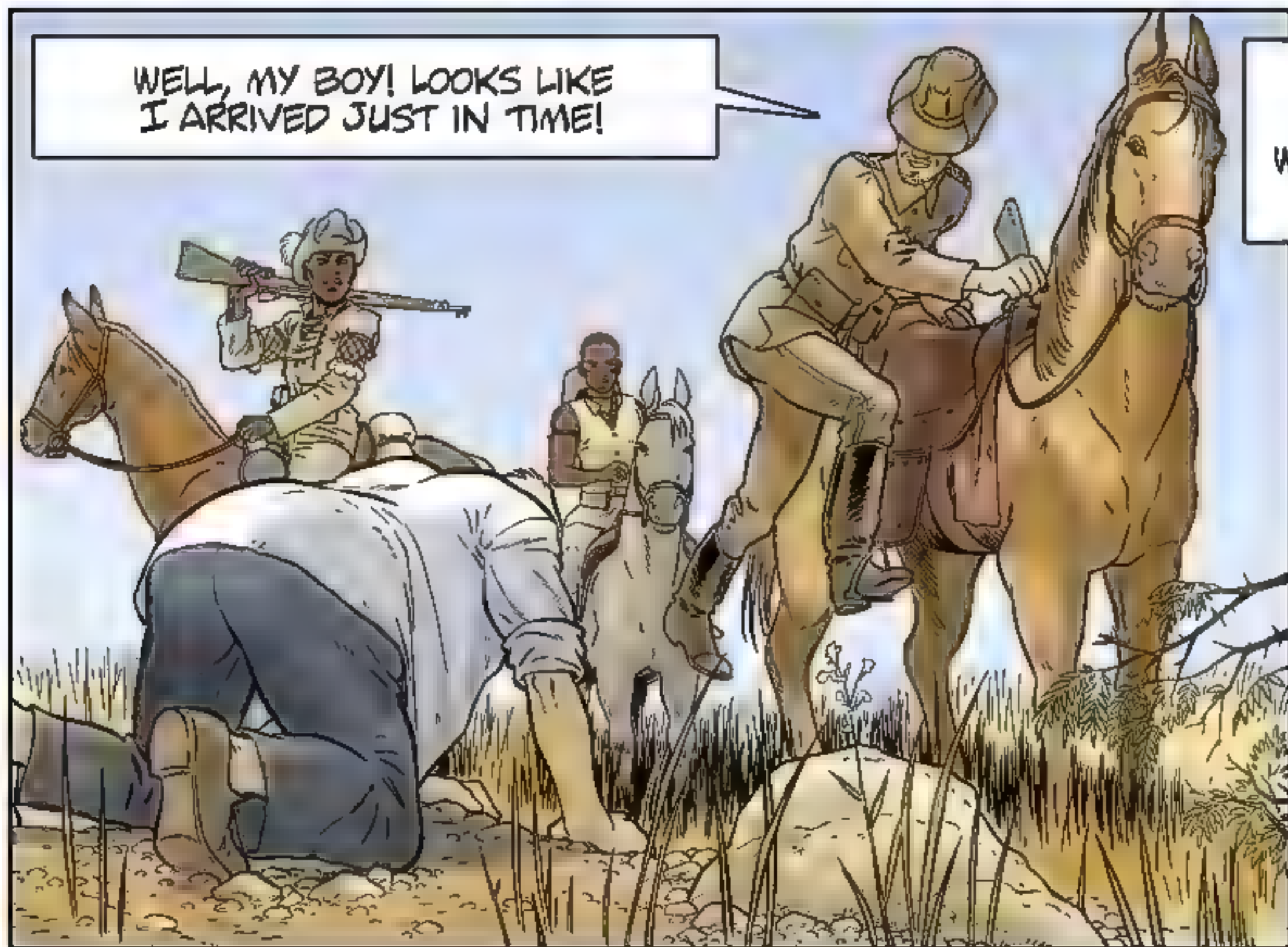
PAW

NO GUN!
I'M A
GONER!

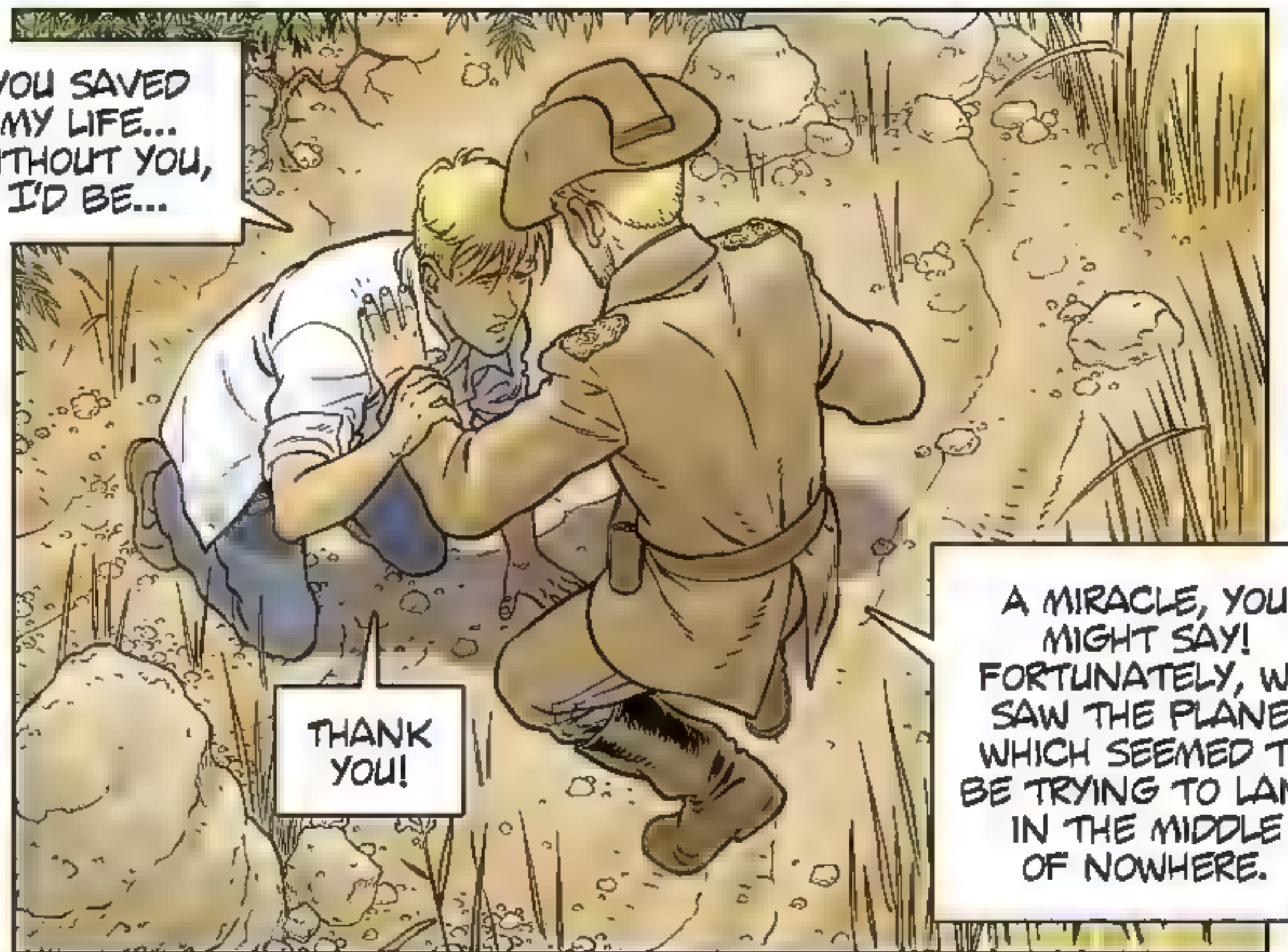


SCHEISSE!
MISSED
AGAIN!

UNCLE
FRIEDRICH?!



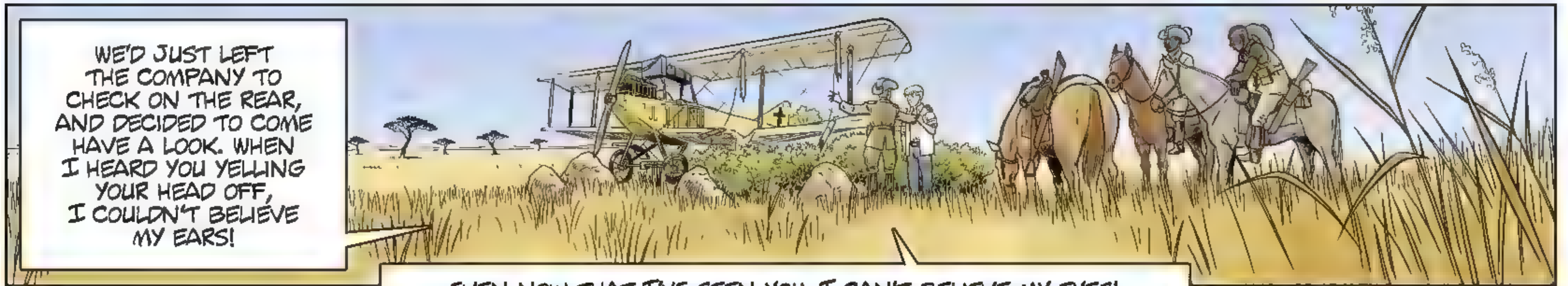
WELL, MY BOY! LOOKS LIKE
I ARRIVED JUST IN TIME!



YOU SAVED
MY LIFE...
WITHOUT YOU,
I'D BE...

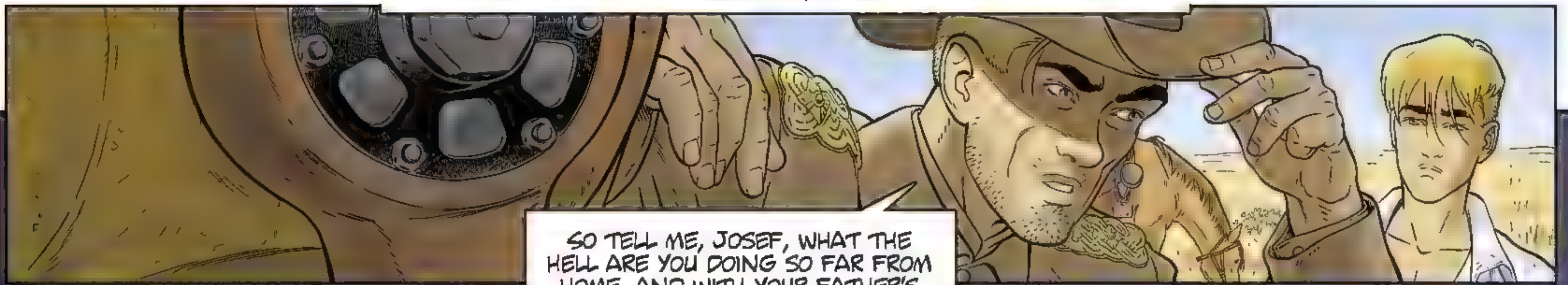
THANK
YOU!

A MIRACLE, YOU
MIGHT SAY!
FORTUNATELY, WE
SAW THE PLANE,
WHICH SEEMED TO
BE TRYING TO LAND
IN THE MIDDLE
OF NOWHERE.



WE'D JUST LEFT
THE COMPANY TO
CHECK ON THE REAR,
AND DECIDED TO COME
HAVE A LOOK. WHEN
I HEARD YOU YELLING
YOUR HEAD OFF,
I COULDN'T BELIEVE
MY EARS!

EVEN NOW THAT I'VE SEEN YOU, I CAN'T BELIEVE MY EYES!



SO TELL ME, JOSEF, WHAT THE
HELL ARE YOU DOING SO FAR FROM
HOME, AND WITH YOUR FATHER'S
PLANE? NOTHING TERRIBLE'S
HAPPENED TO HIM, I HOPE?



SO YOU'RE TELLING US, YOUNG MAN, THAT THOSE HELLISH BELGIANS ARE ABOUT 45 MILES BEHIND US?

RIGHT ABOUT HERE, HERR HAUPTMANN. (1) AT LEAST 300 OF THEM!

REALLY? YOU COUNTED THEM, DID YOU? HAHA!

UH... NO, BUT MY FATHER AND I USED TO ESTIMATE THE NUMBER OF PEOPLE IN EACH VILLAGE WE FLEW OVER... AND WE WERE NEVER FAR OFF.

GENTLEMEN, WE'RE IN A TIGHT SPOT! WE'LL SOON BE CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE. ACCORDING TO OBERLEUTNANT SCHÄFER, WHO'S RECONNOITERED THE ROAD LEADING TO MOSHI, A BATTALION OF THE KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES (2) LIES AHEAD OF US.

IN THAT CASE, THANK YOU, YOUNG MAN! A PITY YOUR AIRPLANE IS NO LONGER OPERATIONAL. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN VERY USEFUL.

AND NOW, THANKS TO OUR YOUNG AIR ACE HERE, WE KNOW THAT 300 OF THE CONGO'S FINEST (3) ARE JUST TWO DAYS' MARCH AWAY AND NIPPING AT OUR HEELS.

SO OUR ULTIMATE OBJECTIVE--WHICH, I WILL REMIND YOU, IS TO DESTROY MOSHI'S RAILROAD TERMINAL--SEEMS RATHER A TALL ORDER.

IF YOU DON'T MIND, SIR... I, UH... I HAVE A SUGGESTION TO MAKE.

YOU?

JOSEF?!

(1) CAPTAIN. (2) BRITISH COLONIAL TROOPS.

(3) A COMBINED MILITARY AND POLICE FORCE CREATED BY LEOPOLD II OF BELGIUM TO DEFEND THE CONGO.

I NOTICED YOU HAVE TWO CANNONS. SO I GUESS YOU ALSO HAVE SHELLS?

WELL, OF COURSE!

DO YOU HAVE ENOUGH SPARE FUEL FOR YOUR TRUCKS TO LET ME HAVE A LITTLE?

WHERE'S THIS HEADING, BOY?

I CAN DESTROY THE RAILROAD TERMINAL FOR YOU!!

MY AIRPLANE WILL EASILY GET AS FAR AS MOSHI--IT'S NOT TOO FAR FROM HERE. IF I LOAD UP WITH SHELLS AND A PASSENGER, HE CAN DROP THEM ON THE TARGET.

IT'S BEEN DONE IN EUROPE. I READ ABOUT IT IN "ÜBER LAND UND MEER"...

BUT IT'LL BE DANGEROUS, JOSEF!

NOT IF I FLY HIGH ENOUGH, UNCLE FRIEDRICH.

WITH A FEW MEN, SOME TOOLS, AND A LITTLE TIME, I CAN REPAIR IT, HERR HAUPTMANN.

HOW MUCH TIME?

IT'S HARD TO SAY... A FEW DAYS, FOR SURE.

IT'S AN INTERESTING IDEA, YOUNG MAN, BUT I THOUGHT YOUR PLANE WAS OUT OF COMMISSION...

HERR HAUPTMANN, YOU'RE SURELY NOT--

WHAT, OBERLEUTNANT?

BUT THERE'S NO RISK, UNCLE FRIEDRICH. OUR AFRIKA KORPS DOESN'T HAVE ANY AIRPLANES, SO THE TOMMIES WON'T BE EXPECTING AN AERIAL ATTACK, AND WE'LL TAKE THEM COMPLETELY BY SURPRISE.

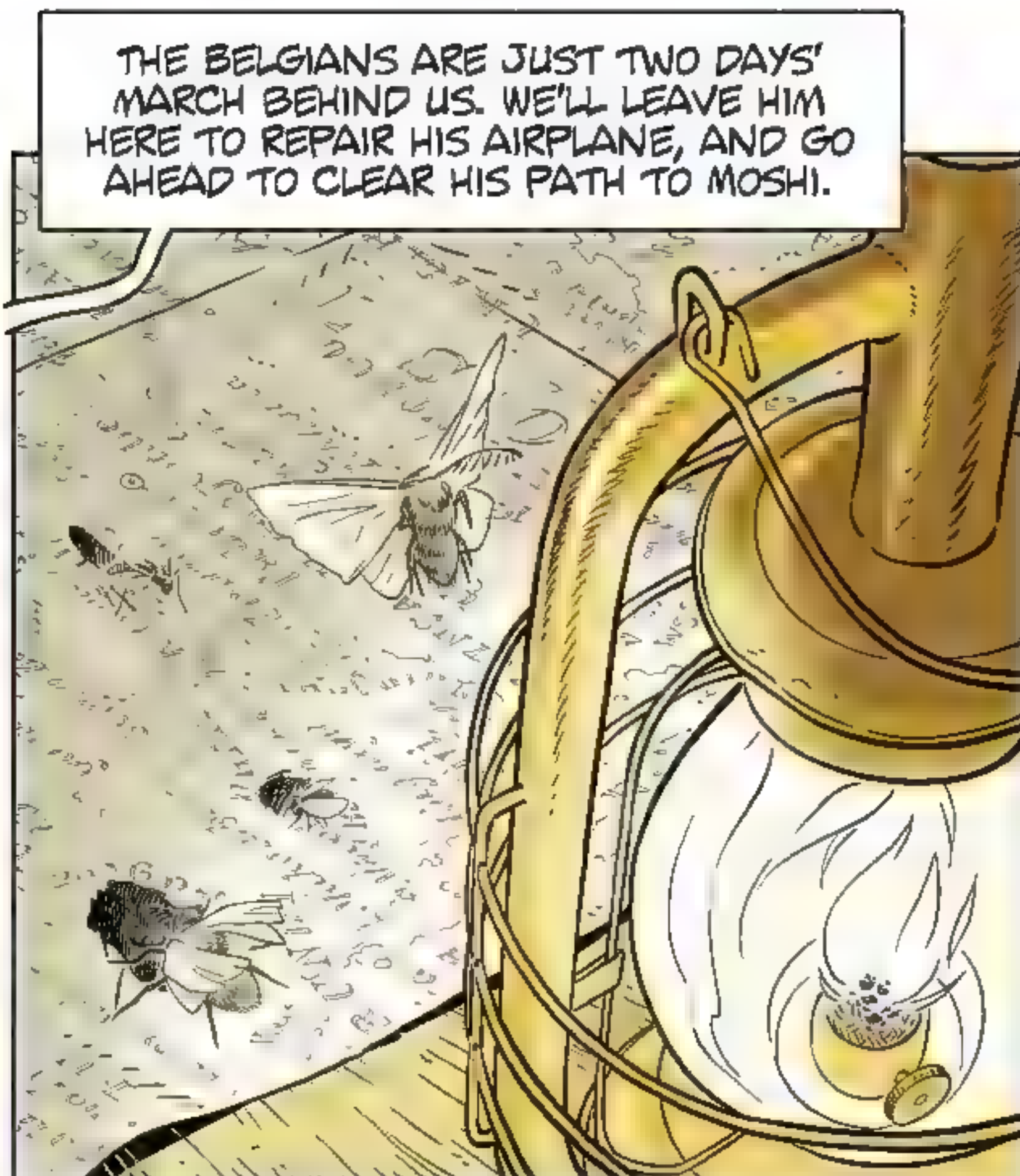
HE'S TOO YOUNG TO RISK HIS LIFE LIKE THAT!

YOUR NEPHEW SEEMS TO HAVE ALL THE ANSWERS, "UNCLE FRIEDRICH"! AND RIGHT NOW, HIS PLAN IS OUR ONLY HOPE OF ACHIEVING OUR OBJECTIVE.



HERR HAUPTMANN, IF YOU'LL LET ME--

THE DISCUSSION IS CLOSED, OBERLEUTNANT. JOSEF HAS VOLUNTEERED. HE'S A TRUE PATRIOT, AND I SAY, "BRAVO!"



THE BELGIANS ARE JUST TWO DAYS' MARCH BEHIND US. WE'LL LEAVE HIM HERE TO REPAIR HIS AIRPLANE, AND GO AHEAD TO CLEAR HIS PATH TO MOSHI.



KRUSE! FIRST THING TOMORROW MORNING, YOU'LL TAKE THE BOY TO HIS PLANE, WHICH YOU'LL CAMOUFLAGED COMPLETELY. THAT'S KEY, OBERJÄGER! (1)

JAWOHL, HERR HAUPTMANN!



MEANWHILE, WE'LL CONTINUE OUR ADVANCE TOWARD MOSHI, WITH THE BELGIANS TRAILING IN OUR WAKE. AS SOON AS WE ENCOUNTER THE KING'S AFRICAN RIFLES, WE'LL HEAD WEST TO DIVERT BOTH SETS OF TROOPS AWAY FROM THE TARGET.



KRUSE! AS SOON AS THE KIEKEFRETTES FOLLOWING US HAVE PASSED BY, YOU'LL HELP JOSEF REPAIR HIS AIRPLANE. TAKE TWO MEN WITH YOU, AND AS MUCH EQUIPMENT AS HE NEEDS.

JAWOHL, HERR HAUPTMANN!



AND DON'T FORGET THE SHELLS! YOU'LL BE GOING WITH HIM ON HIS FLIGHT TO MOSHI.



IS SOMETHING WRONG, OBERJÄGER?

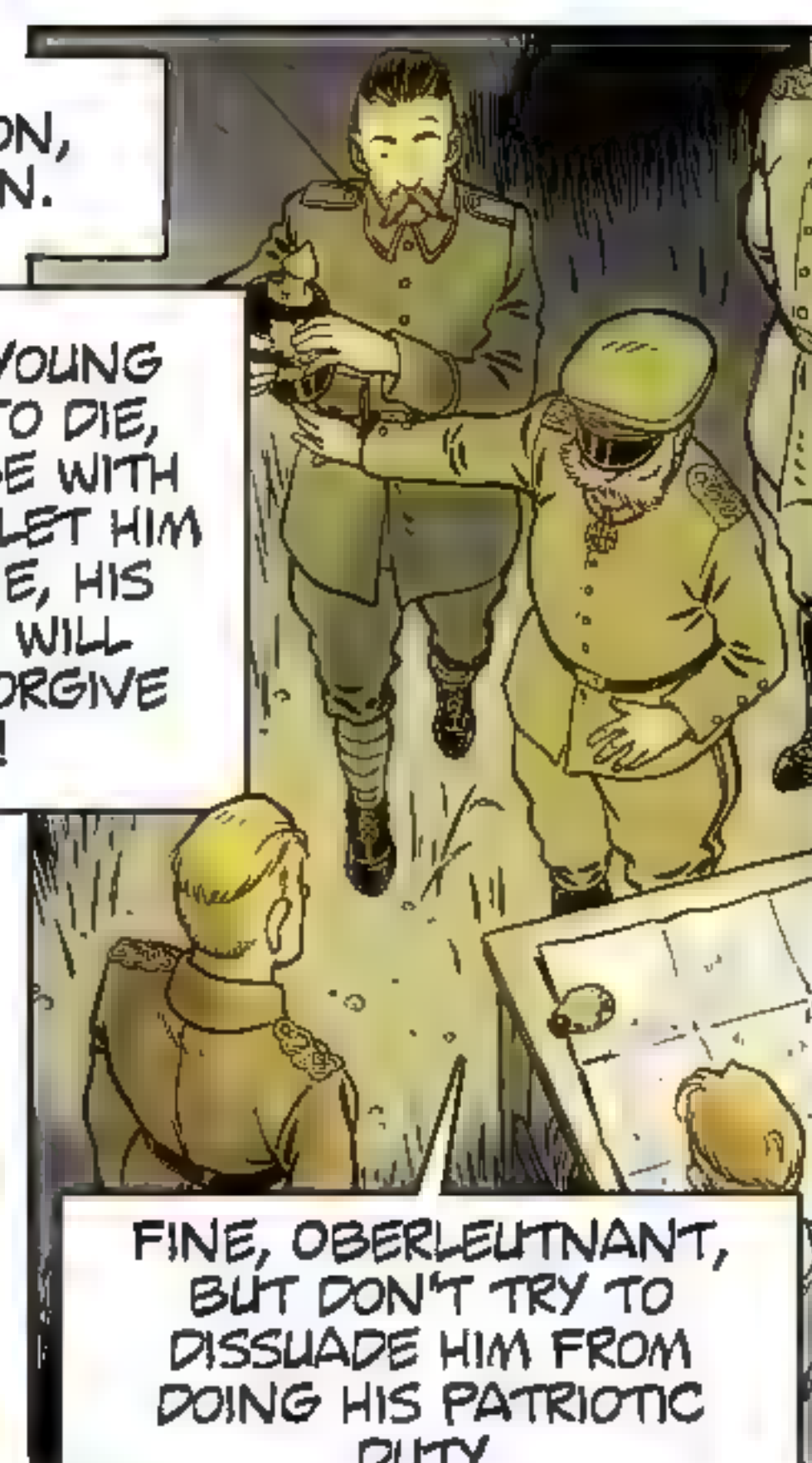
CAN HE REALLY FLY IT, HERR HAUPTMANN?



HE GOT THIS FAR, DIDN'T HE?

HERR HAUPTMANN? WITH YOUR PERMISSION, I'D LIKE TO VOLUNTEER FOR THIS MISSION.

IF THIS YOUNG MAN IS TO DIE, I MUST BE WITH HIM! IF I LET HIM GO ALONE, HIS FATHER WILL NEVER FORGIVE ME!



FINE, OBERLEUTNANT, BUT DON'T TRY TO DISSUADE HIM FROM DOING HIS PATRIOTIC DUTY.



DO I HAVE YOUR WORD?

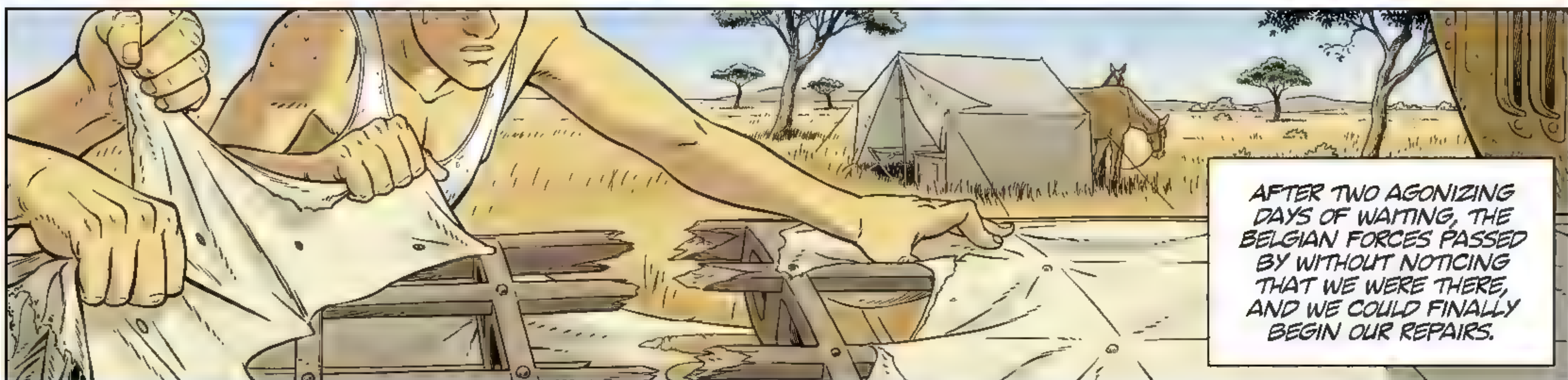
YOU DO, HERR HAUPTMANN.

(1) SERGEANT.

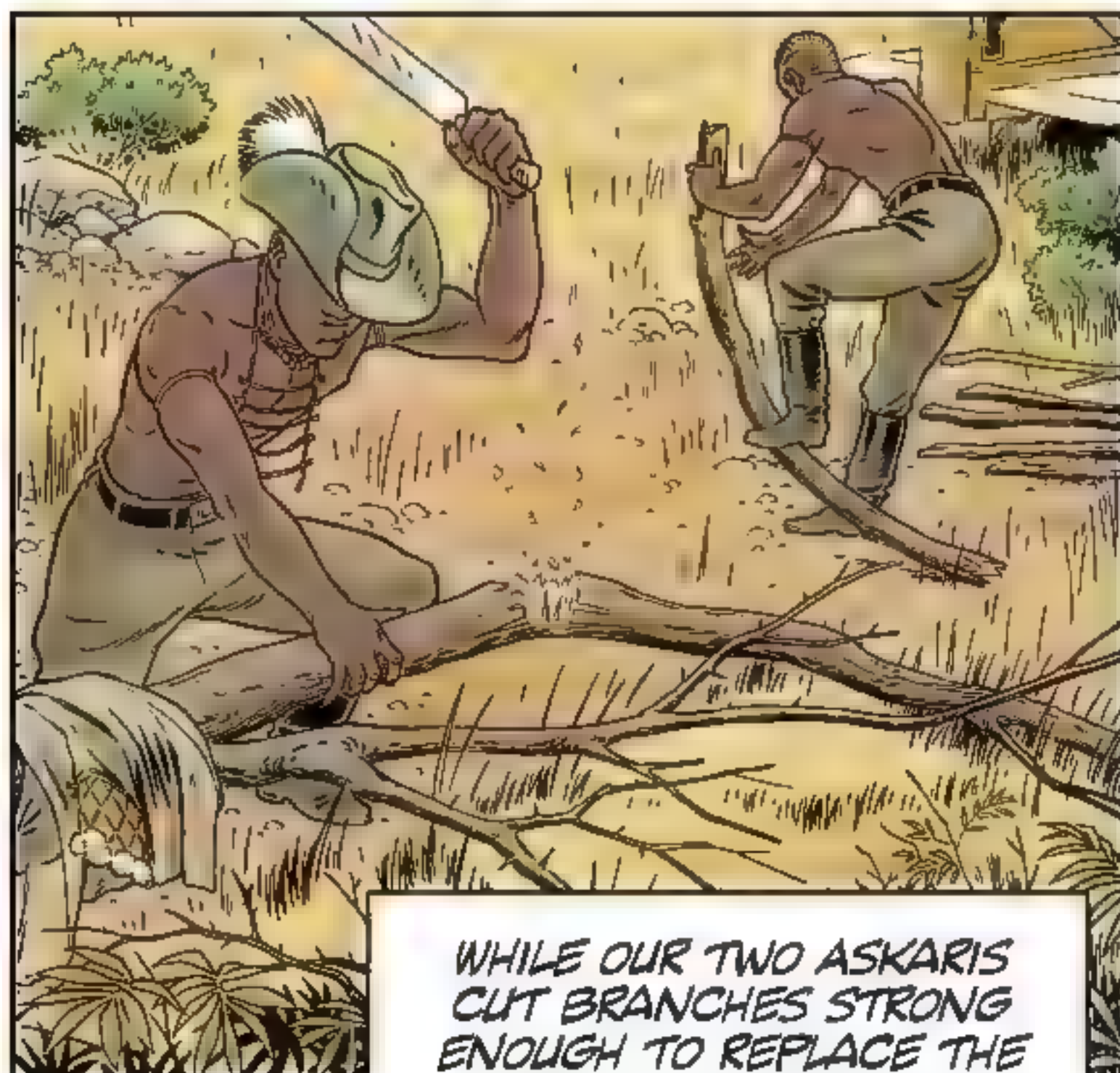
EVERYTHING WAS
DONE EXACTLY
AS AGREED.



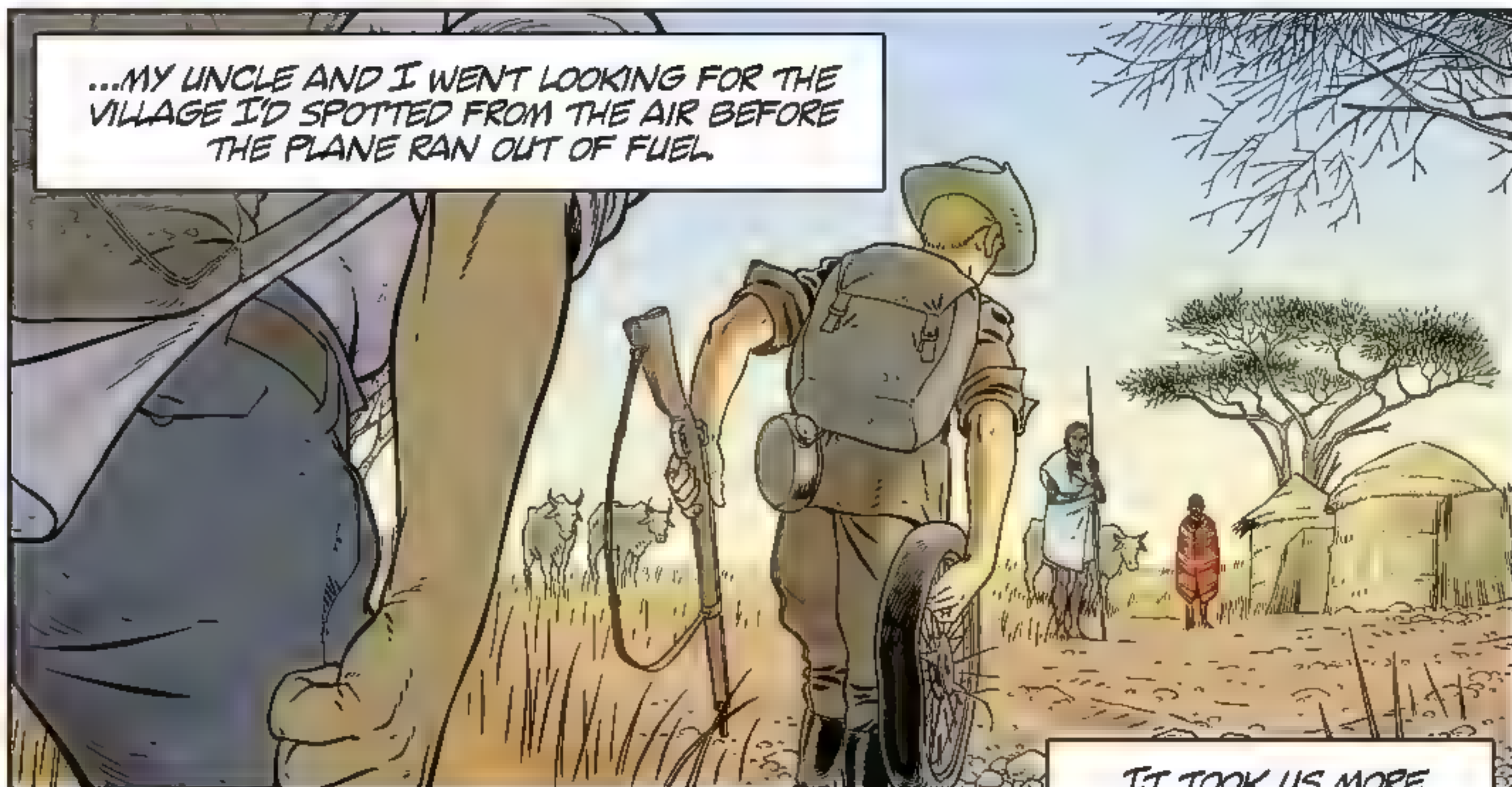
AS THE ALBATROS WAS A LITTLE OFF THE PATH
THAT THE GERMAN SQUADRON HAD TAKEN, WE
HAD TO HOPE THAT THE SCOUTS SENT AHEAD
BY THE PURSUING BELGIANS DIDN'T SEARCH
TOO FAR IN OUR DIRECTION.



AFTER TWO AGONIZING
DAYS OF WAITING, THE
BELGIAN FORCES PASSED
BY WITHOUT NOTICING
THAT WE WERE THERE,
AND WE COULD FINALLY
BEGIN OUR REPAIRS.

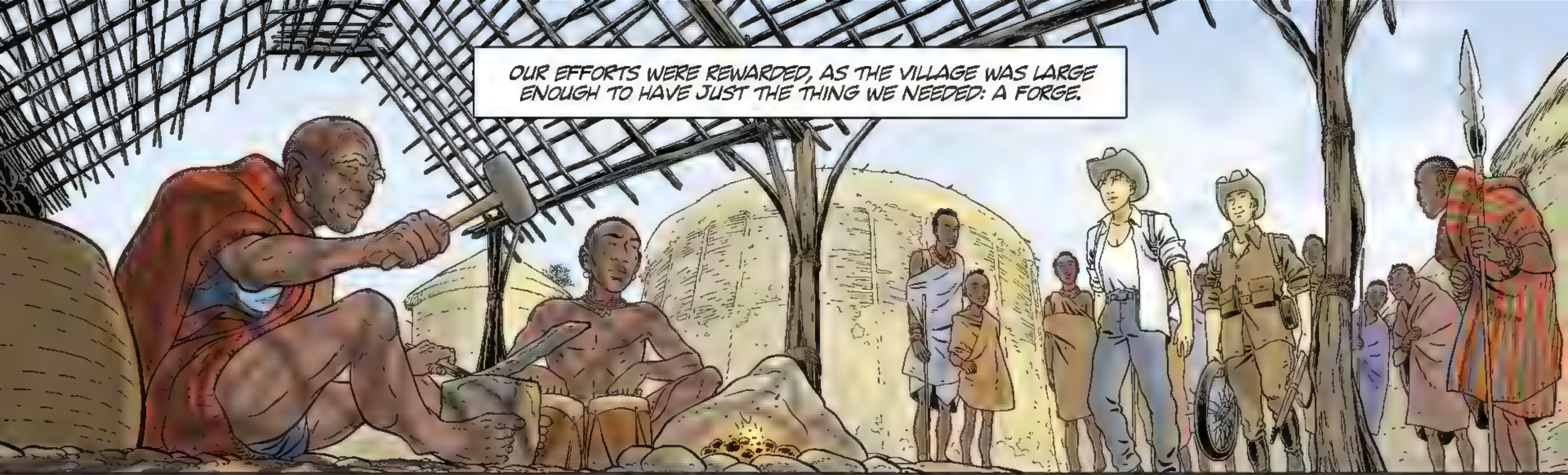


WHILE OUR TWO ASKARIS
CUT BRANCHES STRONG
ENOUGH TO REPLACE THE
WING STRUTS THAT HAD
BROKEN WHEN I LANDED...

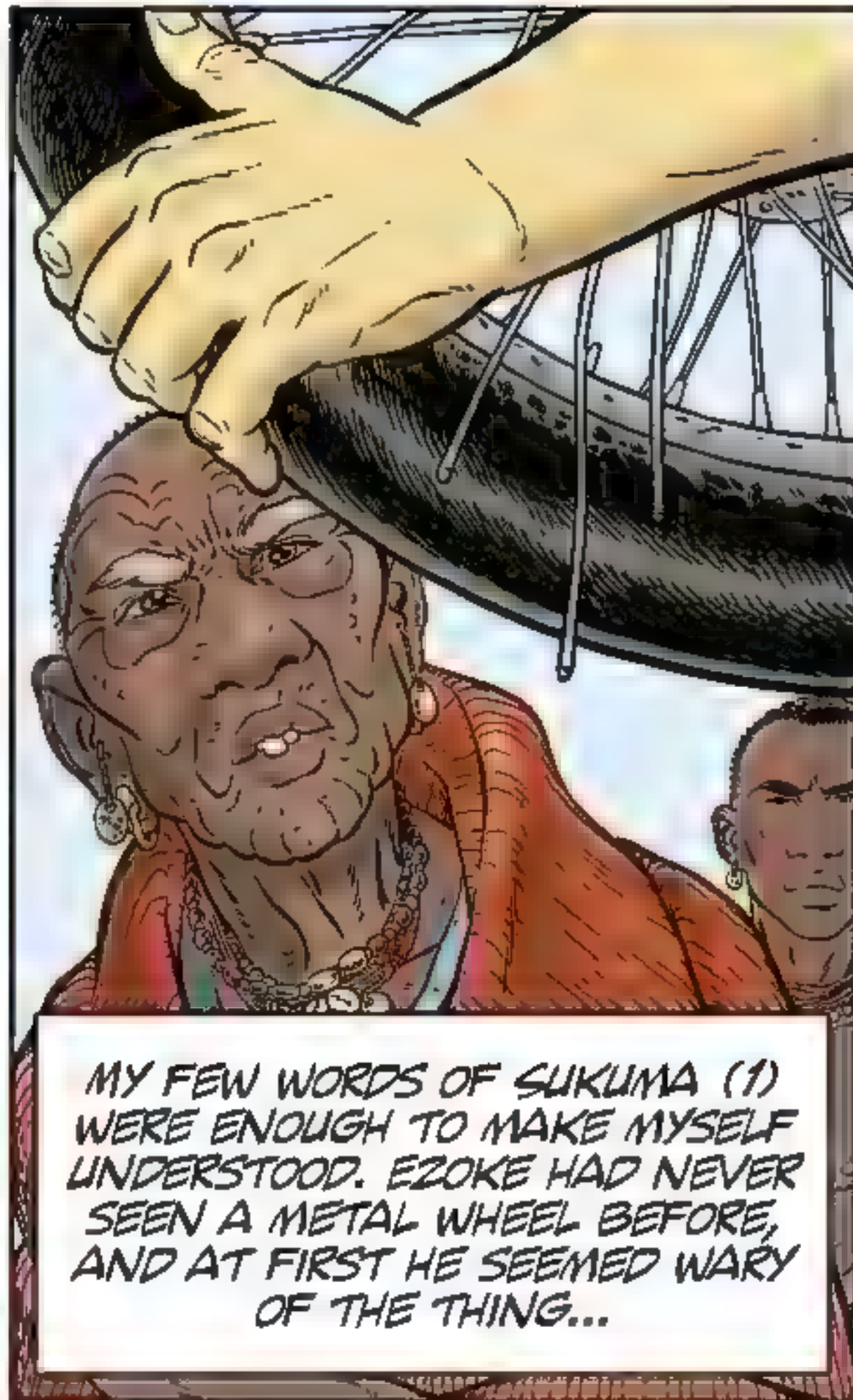


...MY UNCLE AND I WENT LOOKING FOR THE
VILLAGE I'D SPOTTED FROM THE AIR BEFORE
THE PLANE RAN OUT OF FUEL

IT TOOK US MORE
THAN TWO HOURS
TO FIND IT!



OUR EFFORTS WERE REWARDED, AS THE VILLAGE WAS LARGE ENOUGH TO HAVE JUST THE THING WE NEEDED: A FORGE.



MY FEW WORDS OF SUKUMA (1) WERE ENOUGH TO MAKE MYSELF UNDERSTOOD. EZOKE HAD NEVER SEEN A METAL WHEEL BEFORE, AND AT FIRST HE SEEMED WARY OF THE THING...



...BUT THE INQUISITIVE TWINKLE IN HIS EYE TOLD ME HE'D BE ABLE TO FIX IT.



BUT HAVING SPOTTED ONE OR TWO OF THE WHITE MAN'S STRANGE BIRDS FLYING OVERHEAD, HE WANTED TO SEE OURS UP CLOSE.



IT WAS LUCKY THAT THE BELGIANS WERE WELL OUT OF SIGHT, BECAUSE WE WERE ESCORTED BACK TO THE PLANE BY A HUGE ENTOURAGE.



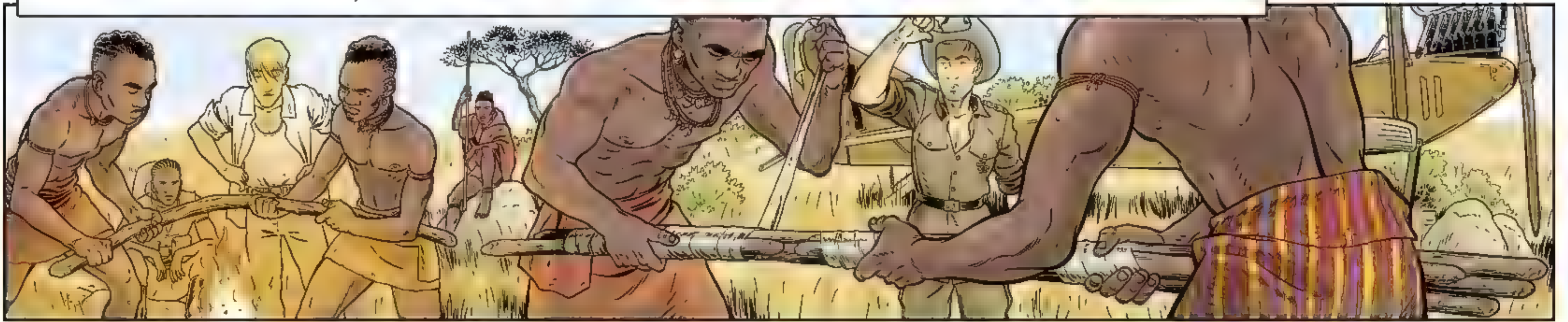
NEWS SURE TRAVELS FAST IN THE BUSH!



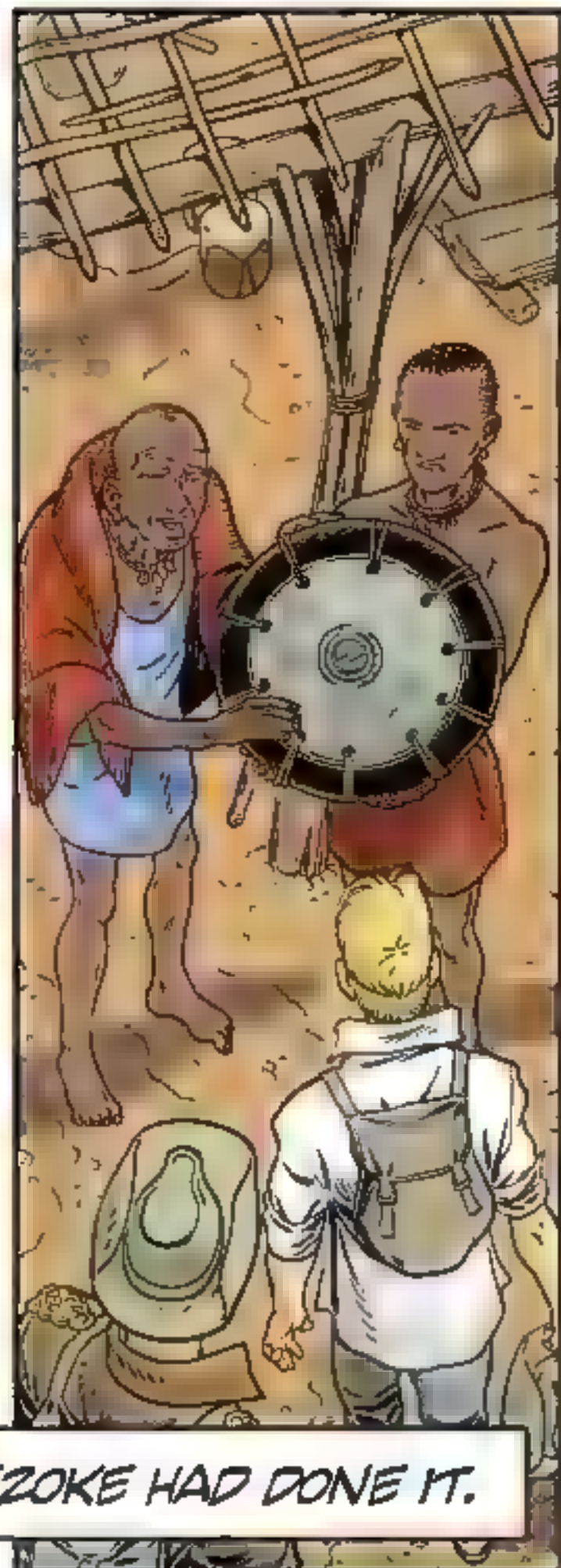
REPAIRING THE BROKEN WING TURNED OUT TO BE MORE COMPLICATED THAN WE'D HOPED, AS IT WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO FIND BRANCHES LONG AND STRAIGHT ENOUGH FOR THE LEADING EDGE...

(1) A BANTU DIALECT WIDELY SPOKEN IN THE REGION EAST OF LAKE VICTORIA.

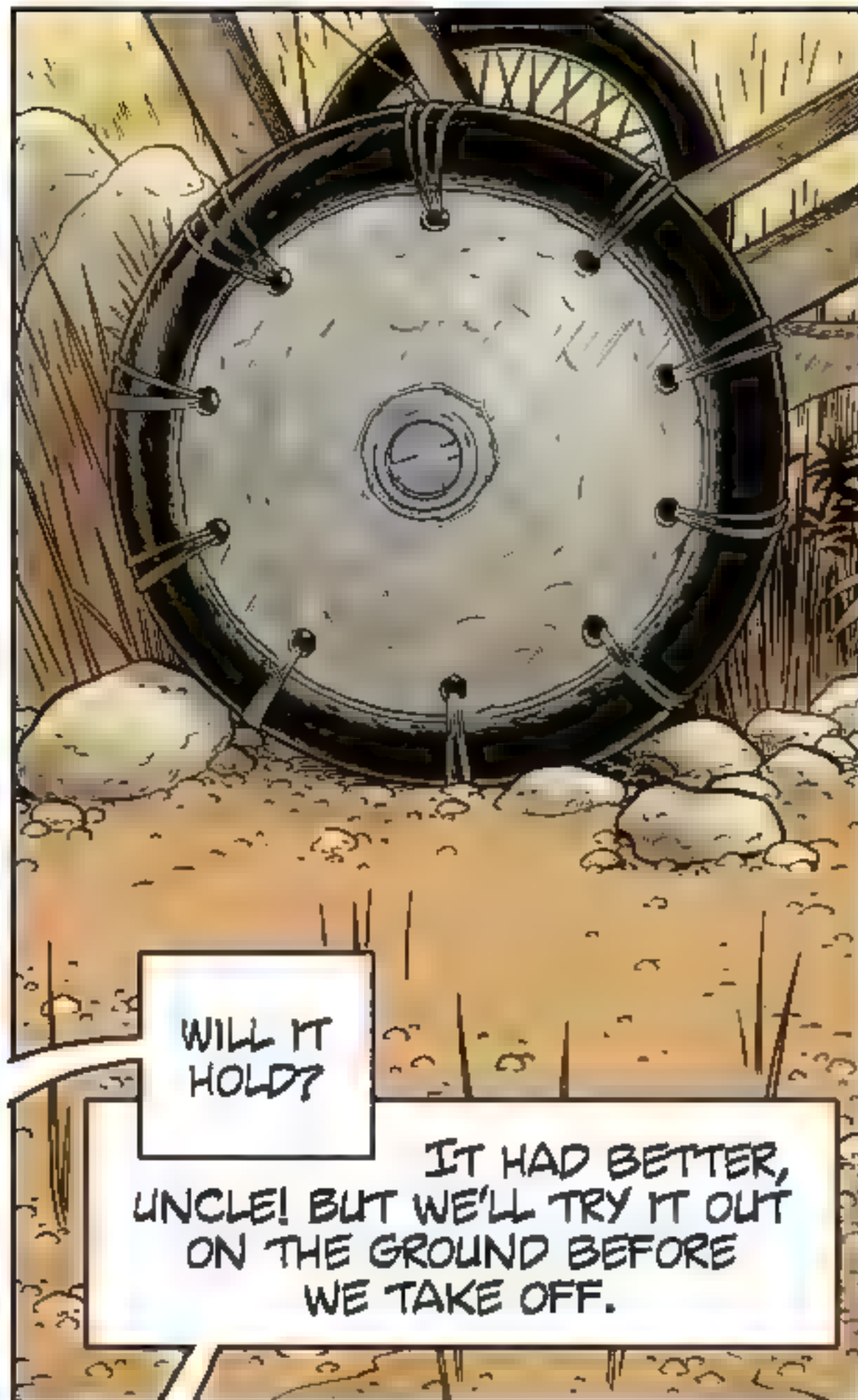
WE HAD TO JOIN PIECES TOGETHER, AND THE VILLAGERS PROVED ENORMOUSLY HELPFUL. SURPRISED BY THEIR INGENUITY, UNCLE FRIEDRICH REVISED HIS OPINION OF THESE "STURDY BUSHMEN."



WITH THE WING STRUCTURE REBUILT, ALL THAT REMAINED WAS TO CUT SOME TENT MATERIAL INTO STRIPS AND STRETCH THEM OVER IT. BUT FIRST, WE HAD TO RETURN TO THE VILLAGE.



EZOKE HAD DONE IT.



WILL IT HOLD?

IT HAD BETTER, UNCLE! BUT WE'LL TRY IT OUT ON THE GROUND BEFORE WE TAKE OFF.



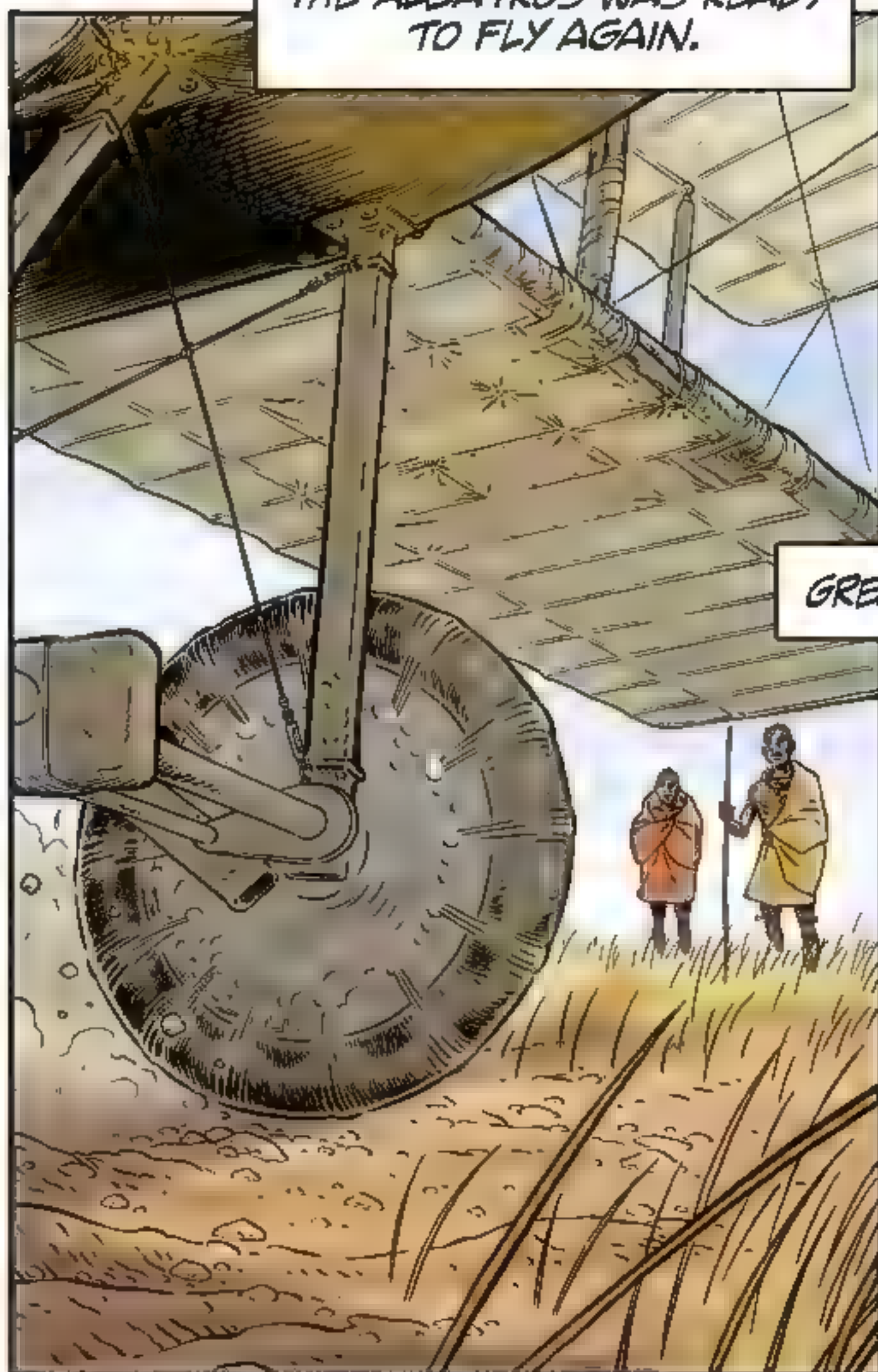
WITH THE VILLAGERS' HELP, OUR TWO ASKARIS HAD CLEARED ENOUGH GROUND TO MAKE A DECENT RUNWAY.



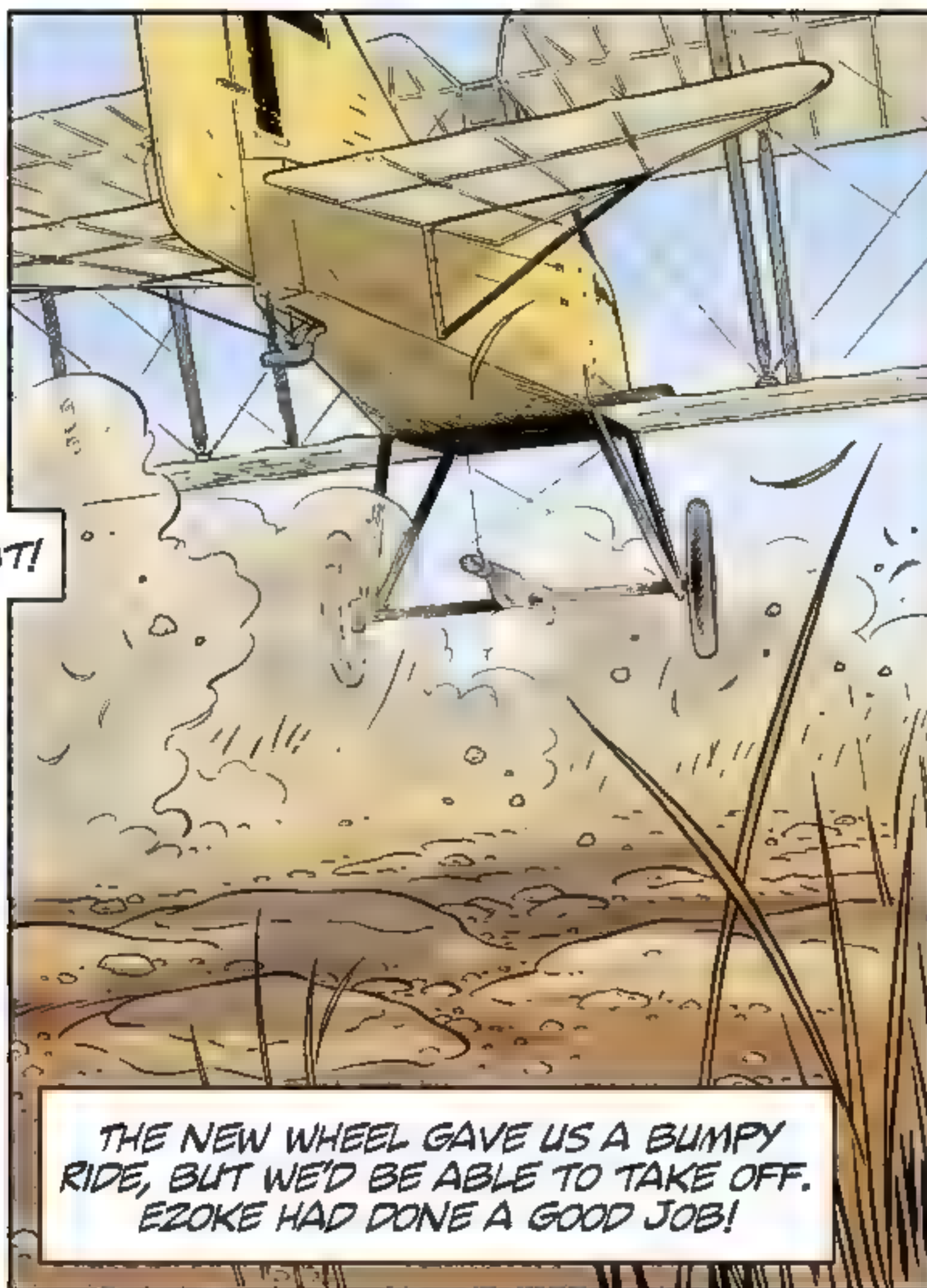
TO REWARD THEM FOR THEIR LABOR, FRIEDRICH GAVE THE HEAD OF THE VILLAGE A RIFLE AND A BOX OF CARTRIDGES.



SIX DAYS AFTER WE'D STARTED THE REPAIRS, THE ALBATROS WAS READY TO FLY AGAIN.

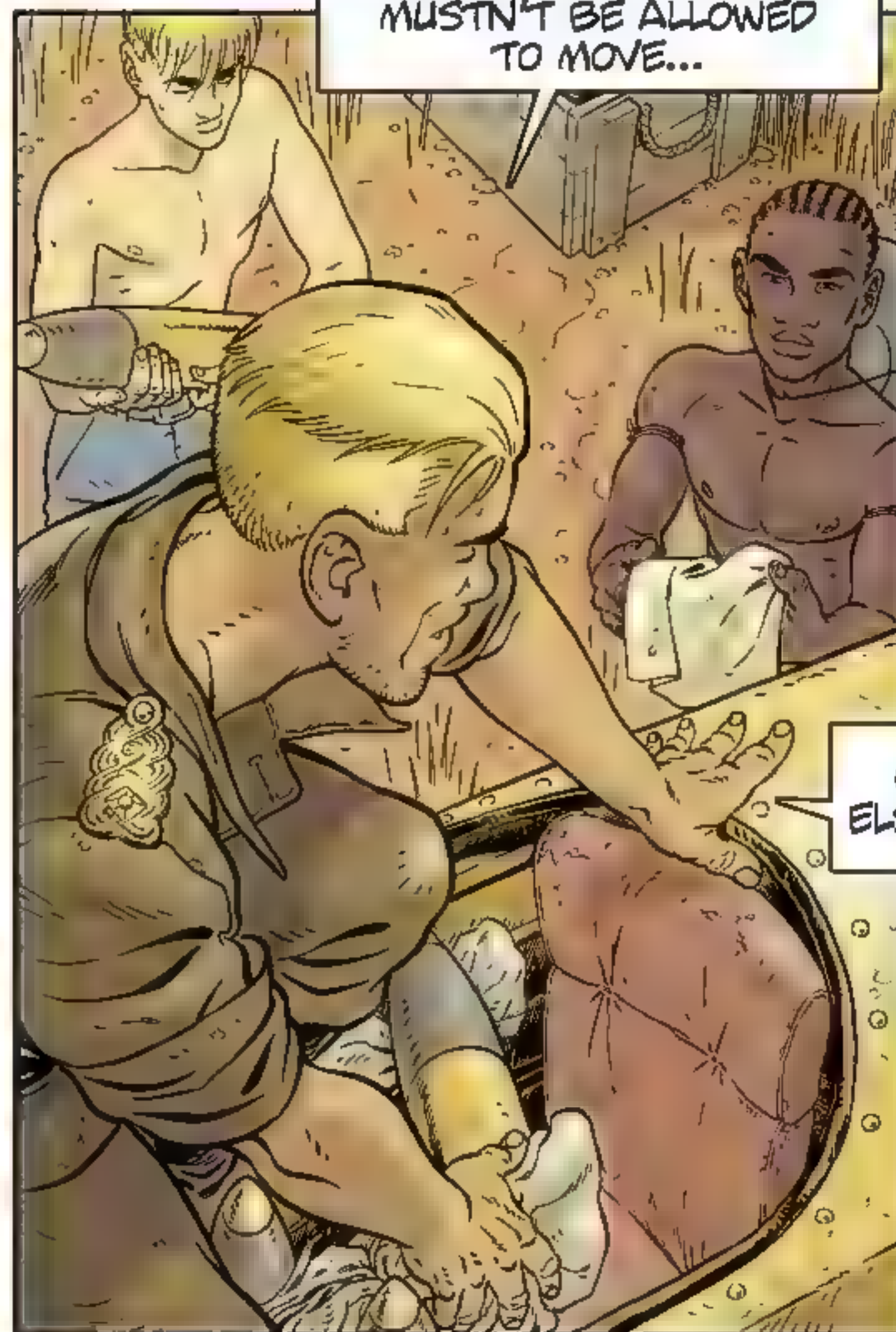


GREAT!



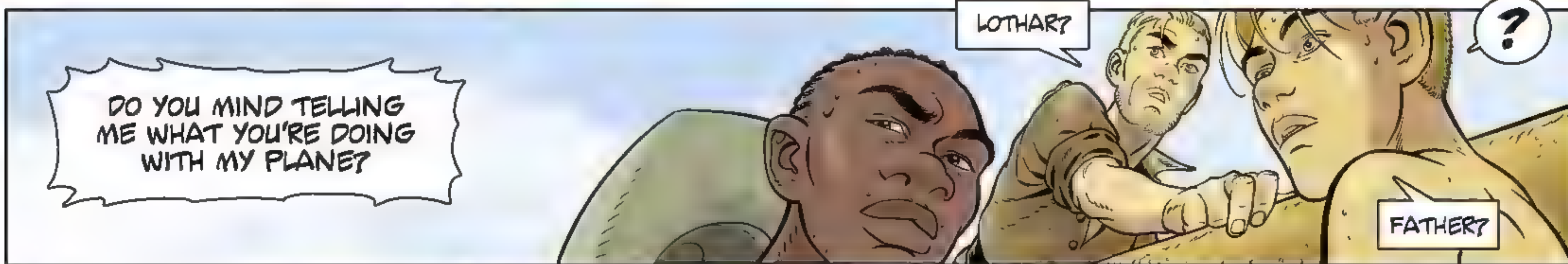
THE NEW WHEEL GAVE US A BUMPY RIDE, BUT WE'D BE ABLE TO TAKE OFF. EZOKE HAD DONE A GOOD JOB!

BRING ME SOME MORE PIECES OF CLOTH, EYANGA. THE SHELLS MUSTN'T BE ALLOWED TO MOVE...



OR ELSE--

DO YOU MIND TELLING ME WHAT YOU'RE DOING WITH MY PLANE?



LOTHAR?

?

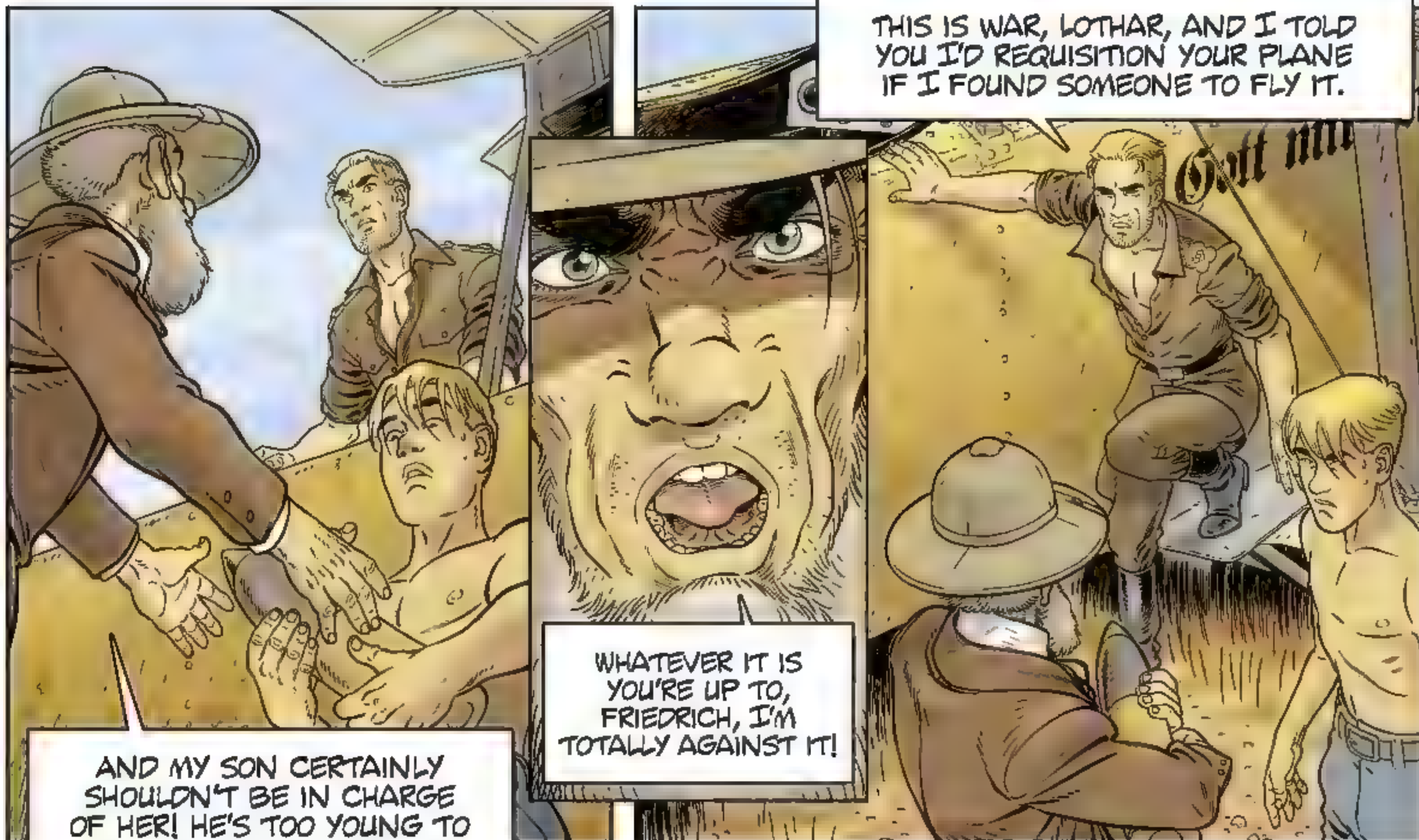
FATHER?

H... HOW ON EARTH DID YOU FIND US?



NEVER MIND HOW! THE IMPORTANT THING IS THAT I FOUND YOU IN TIME TO PREVENT THIS OUTRAGE. THE "GOD BE WITH US" MUSTN'T BE CARRYING WEAPONS OF WAR!

THIS IS WAR, LOTHAR, AND I TOLD YOU I'D REQUISITION YOUR PLANE IF I FOUND SOMEONE TO FLY IT.



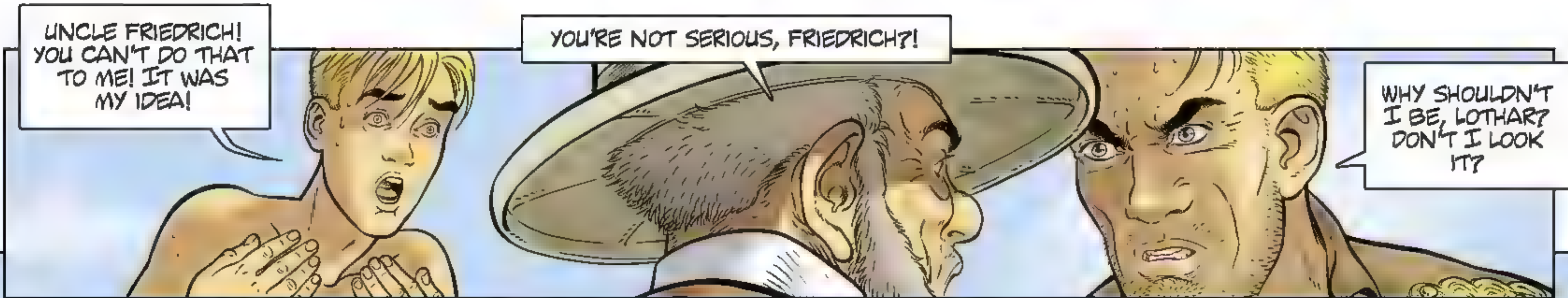
WHATEVER IT IS YOU'RE UP TO, FRIEDRICH, I'M TOTALLY AGAINST IT!

AND MY SON CERTAINLY SHOULDN'T BE IN CHARGE OF HER! HE'S TOO YOUNG TO KNOW WHAT HE'S DOING!

HOWEVER, I AGREE WITH YOU ABOUT ONE THING: JOSEF IS TOO YOUNG TO TAKE SUCH A RISK...



...SO I'LL ASK YOU TO TAKE HIS PLACE!



UNCLE FRIEDRICH!
YOU CAN'T DO THAT
TO ME! IT WAS
MY IDEA!

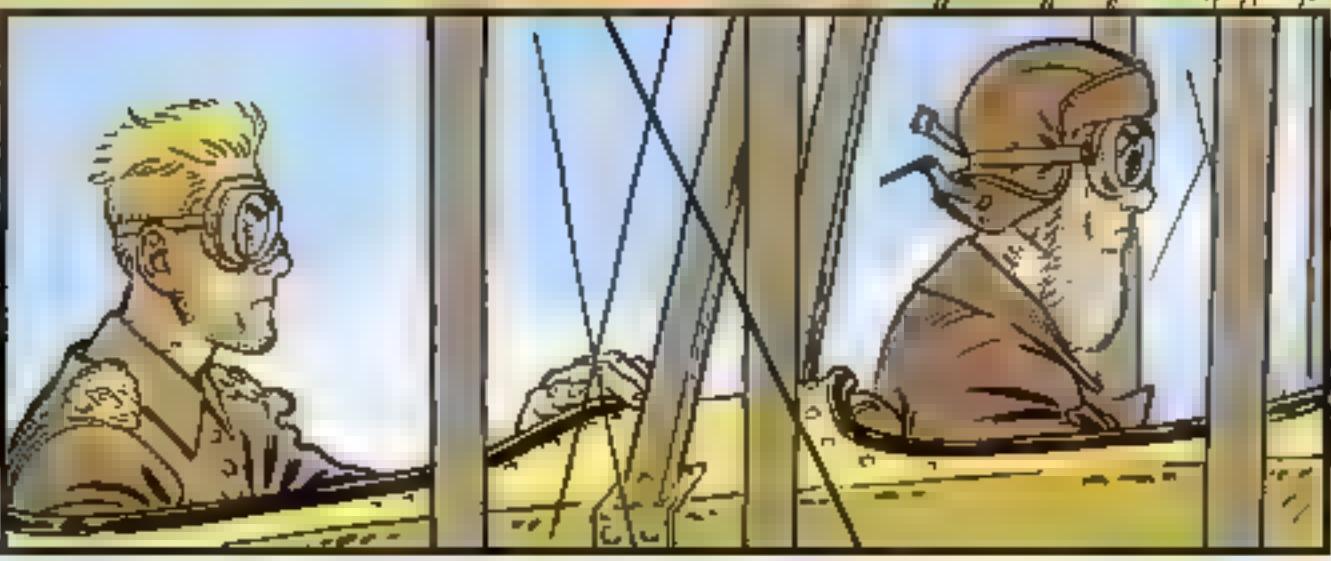
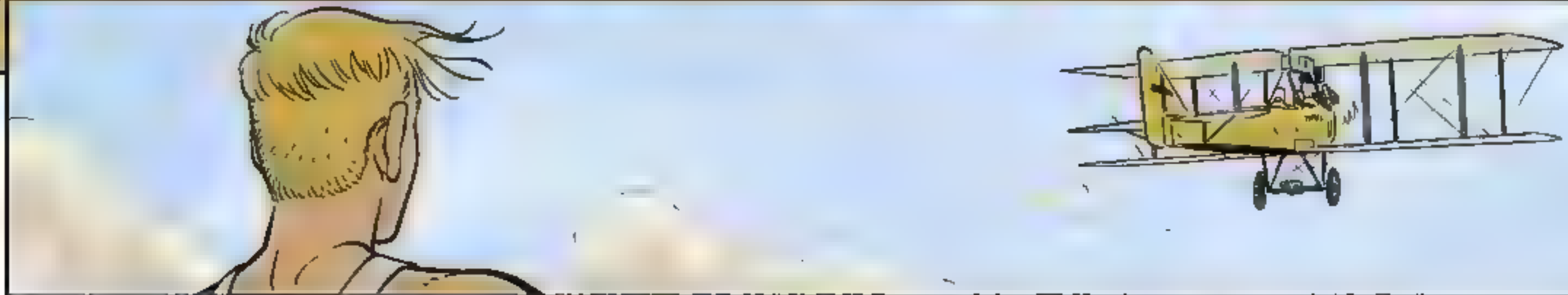
YOU'RE NOT SERIOUS, FRIEDRICH?!

WHY SHOULDN'T
I BE, LOTHAR?
DON'T I LOOK
IT?



IT'S A DANGEROUS MISSION!
TAKE YOUR SON'S PLACE. OR HAS
ALL THAT HOLER-THAN-THOU
PREACHING ERODED YOUR SENSE
OF PATERNAL DUTY?

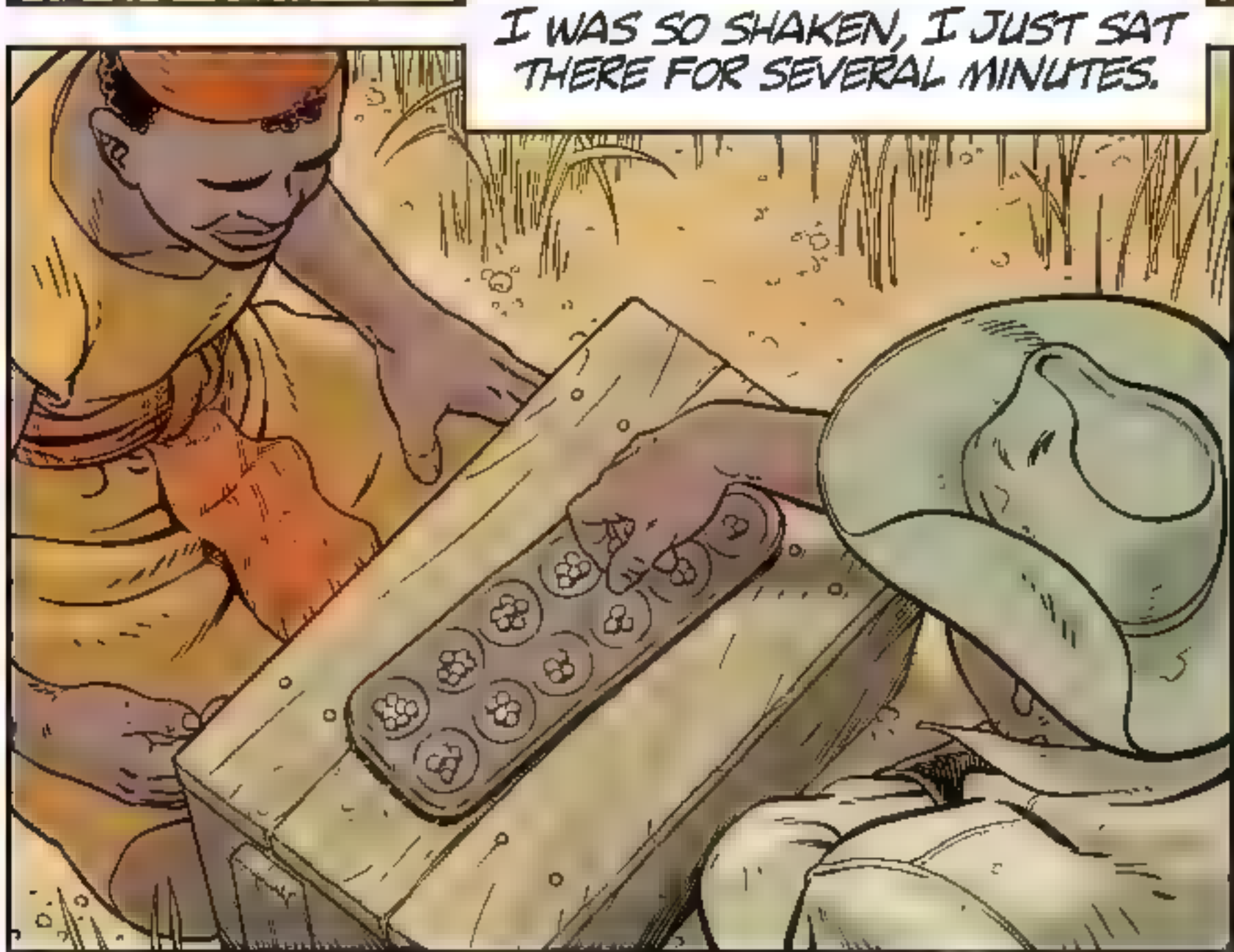
IT'S YOU OR HIM!



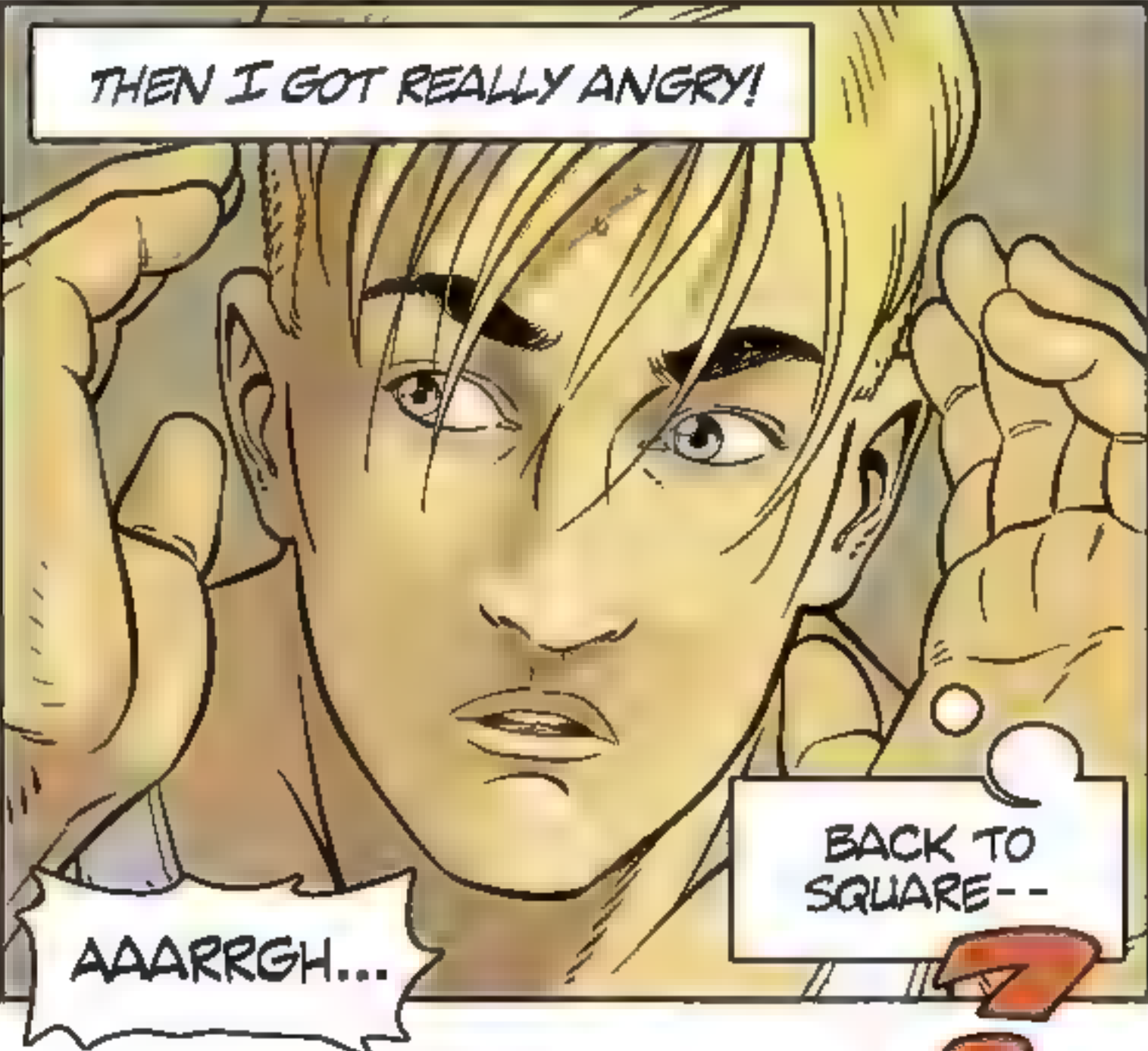
I'D BEEN BETRAYED.
HUMILIATED. MY TWO-FACED
UNCLE HAD MADE A DEAL
WITH MY FATHER.



LOTHAR WOULD FLY THE
MISSION, AND FRIEDRICH
WOULD GIVE HIM BACK HIS
PLANE TO TAKE ME HOME!



I WAS SO SHAKEN, I JUST SAT
THERE FOR SEVERAL MINUTES.

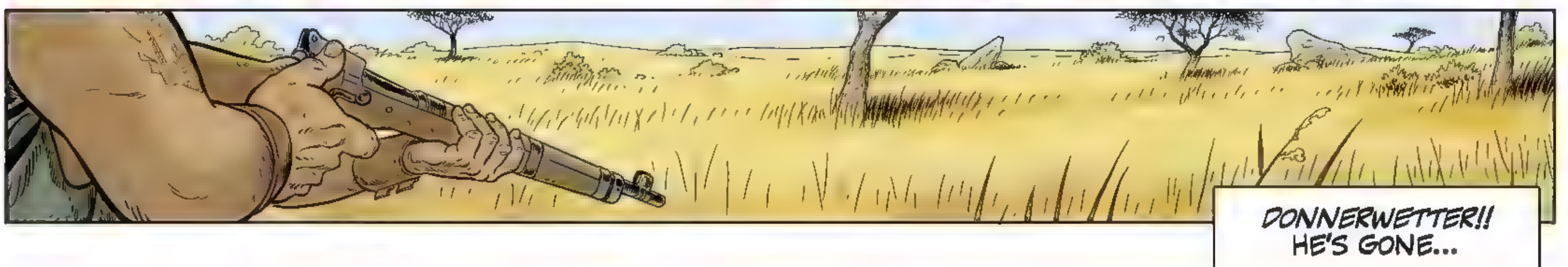
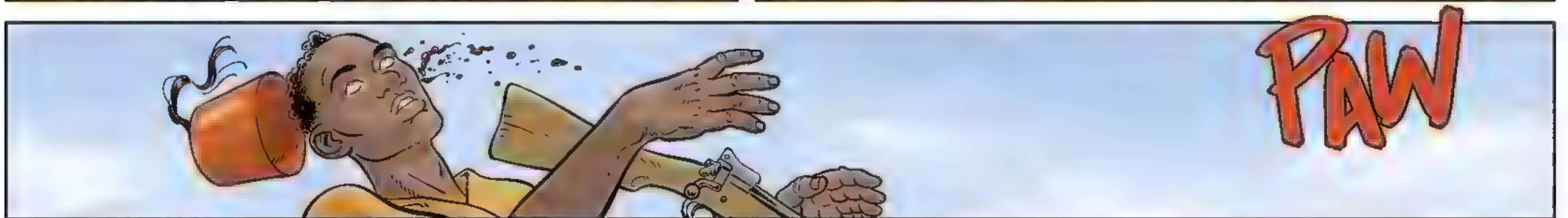
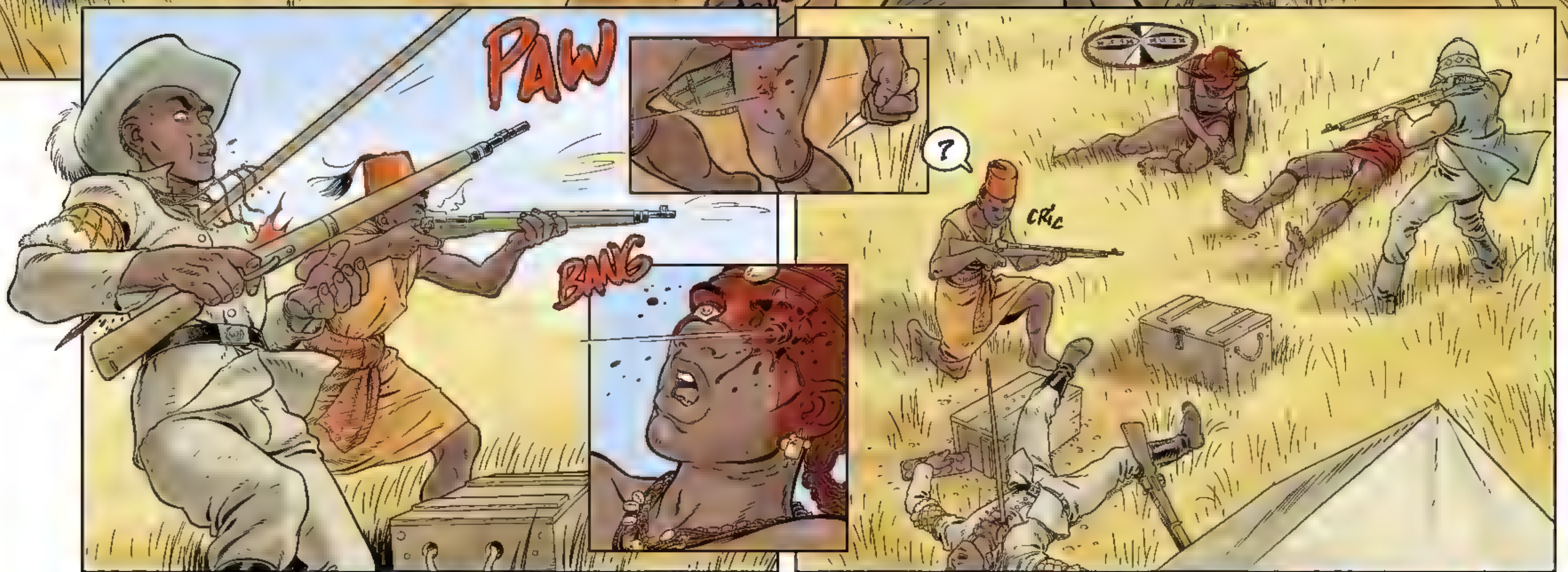


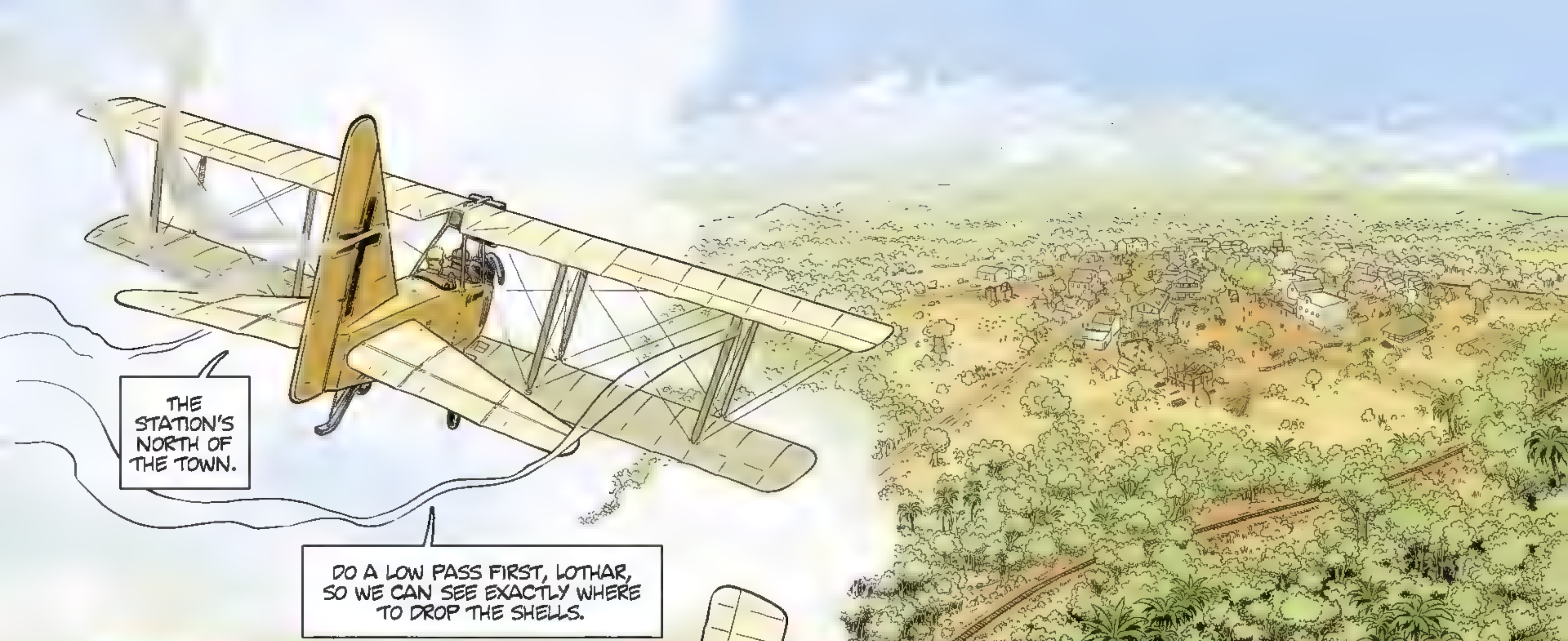
THEN I GOT REALLY ANGRY!

AAARRGH...

BACK TO
SQUARE--

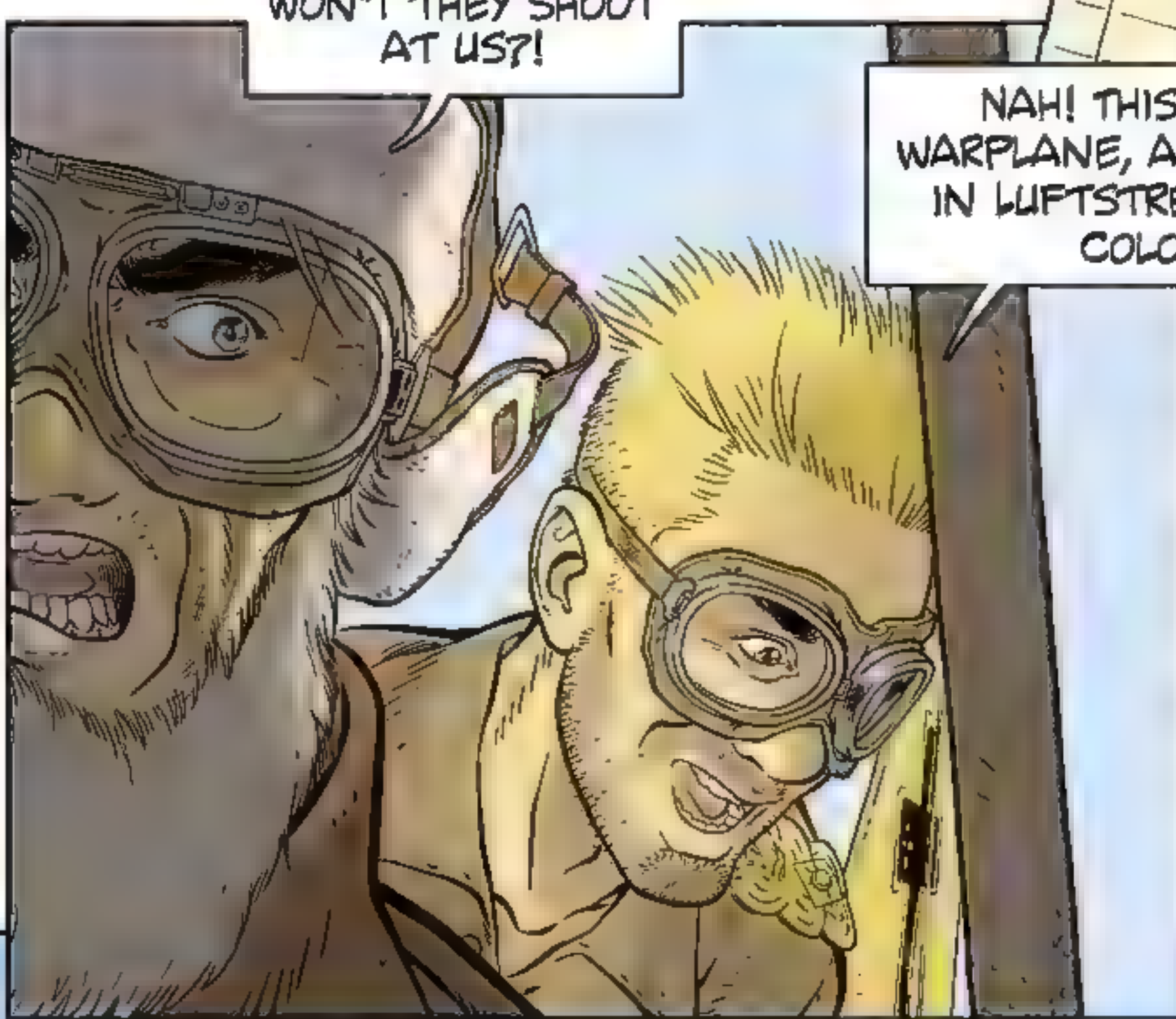
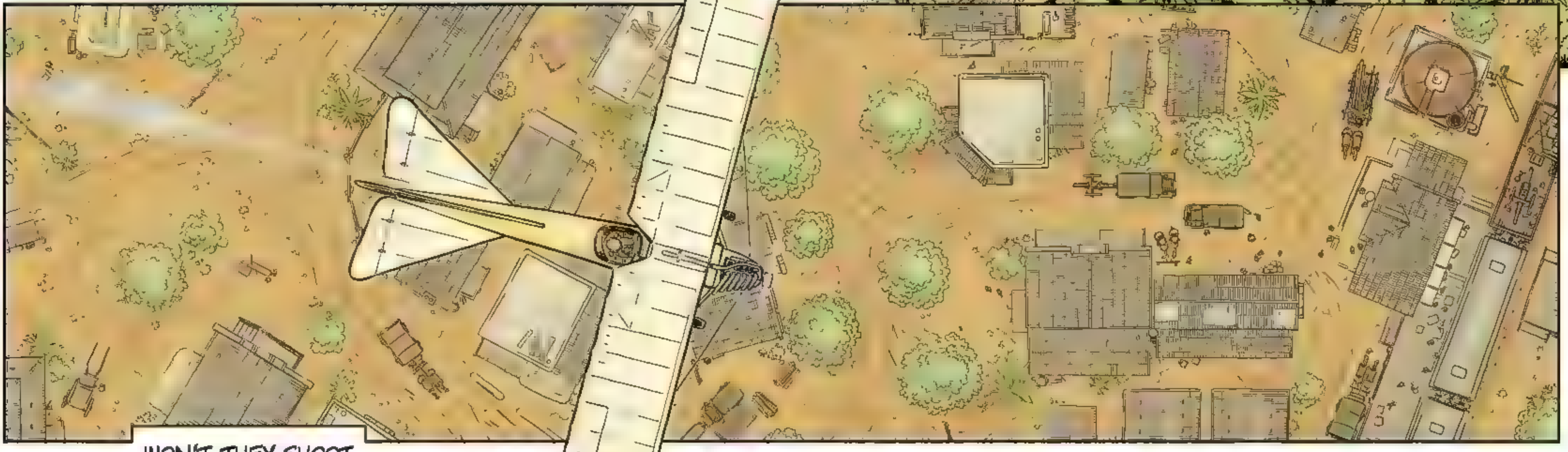






THE
STATION'S
NORTH OF
THE TOWN.

DO A LOW PASS FIRST, LOTHAR,
SO WE CAN SEE EXACTLY WHERE
TO DROP THE SHELLS.



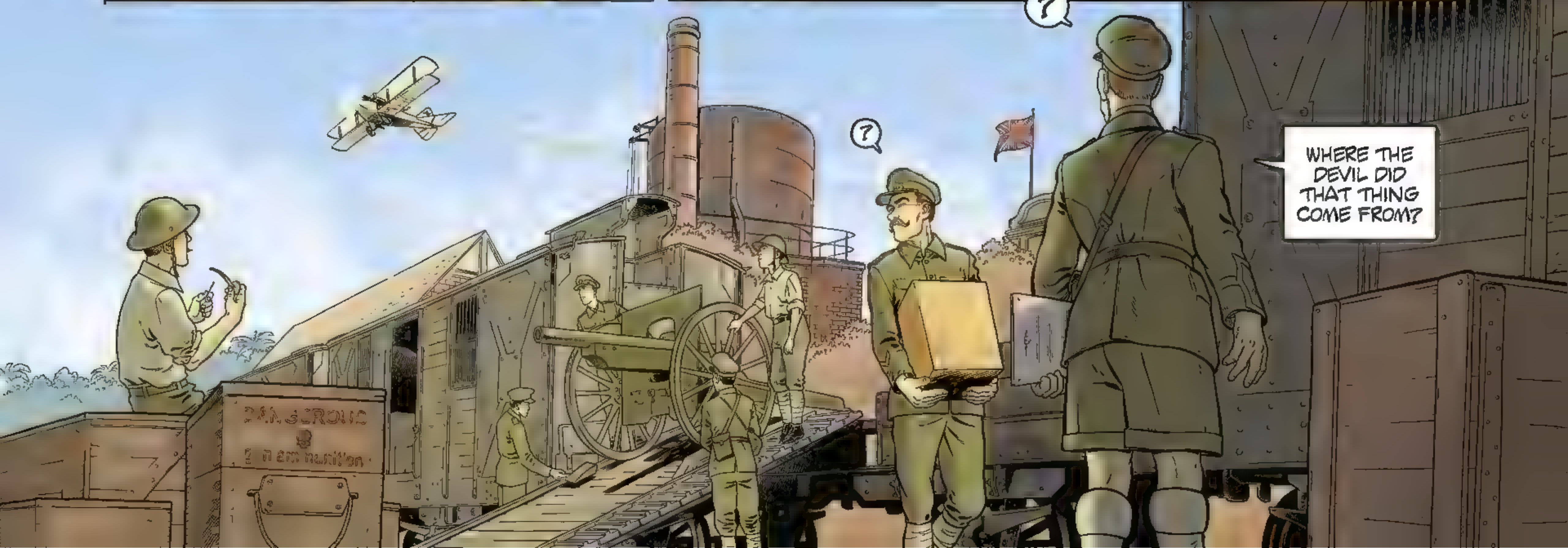
WON'T THEY SHOOT
AT US?!

NAH! THIS ISN'T A
WARPLANE, AND IT'S NOT
IN LUFTSTREITKRÄFTE
COLORS.

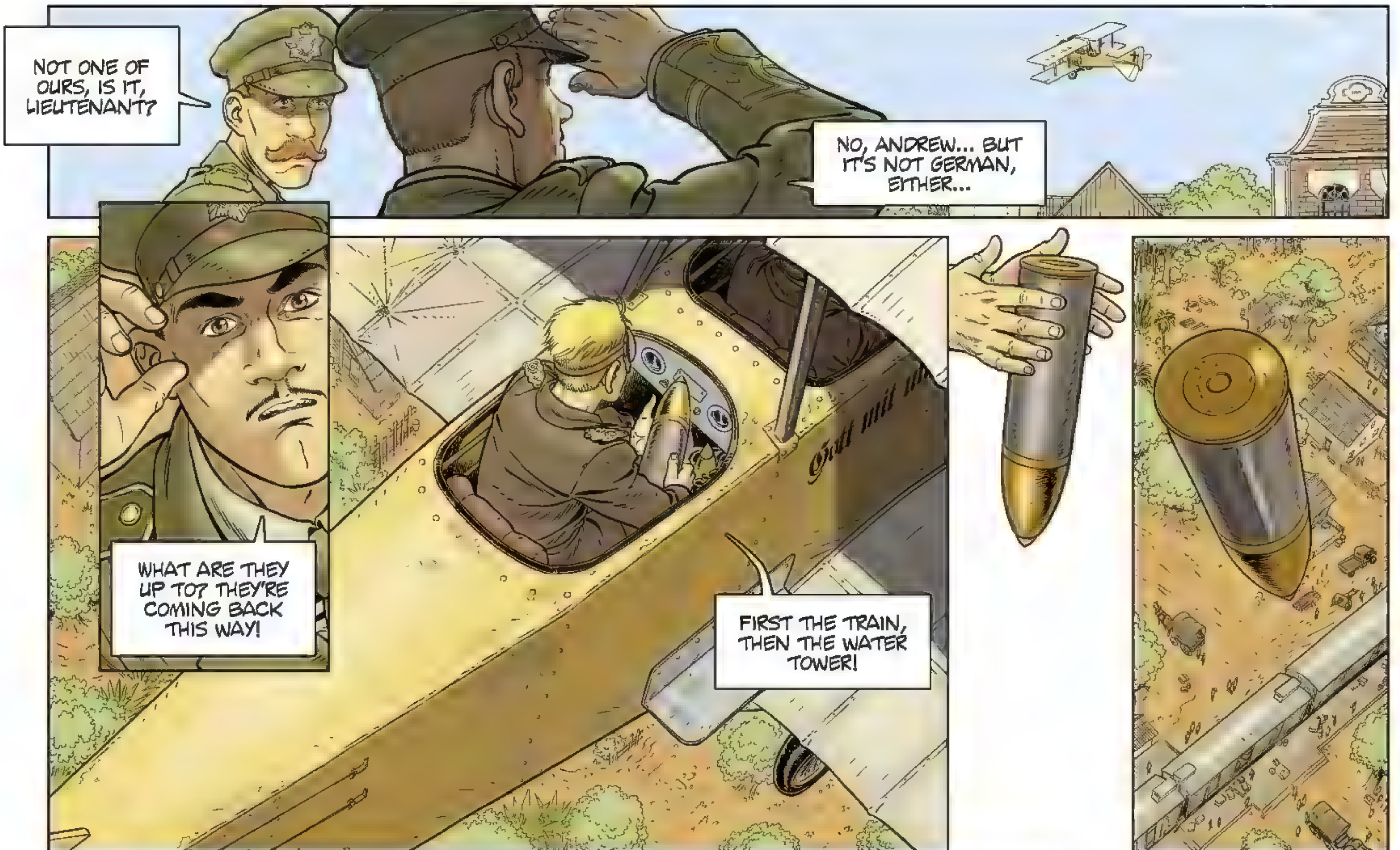


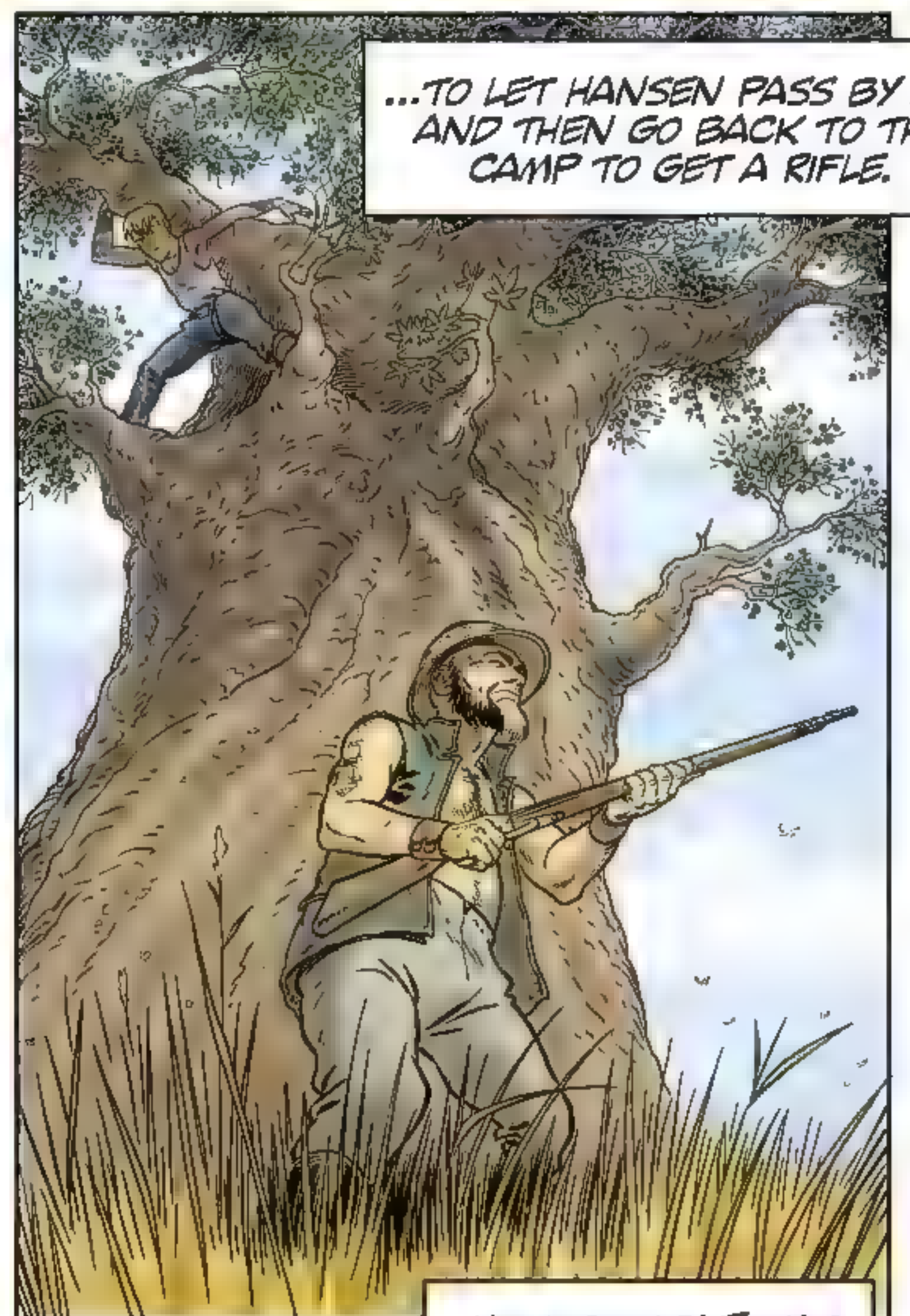
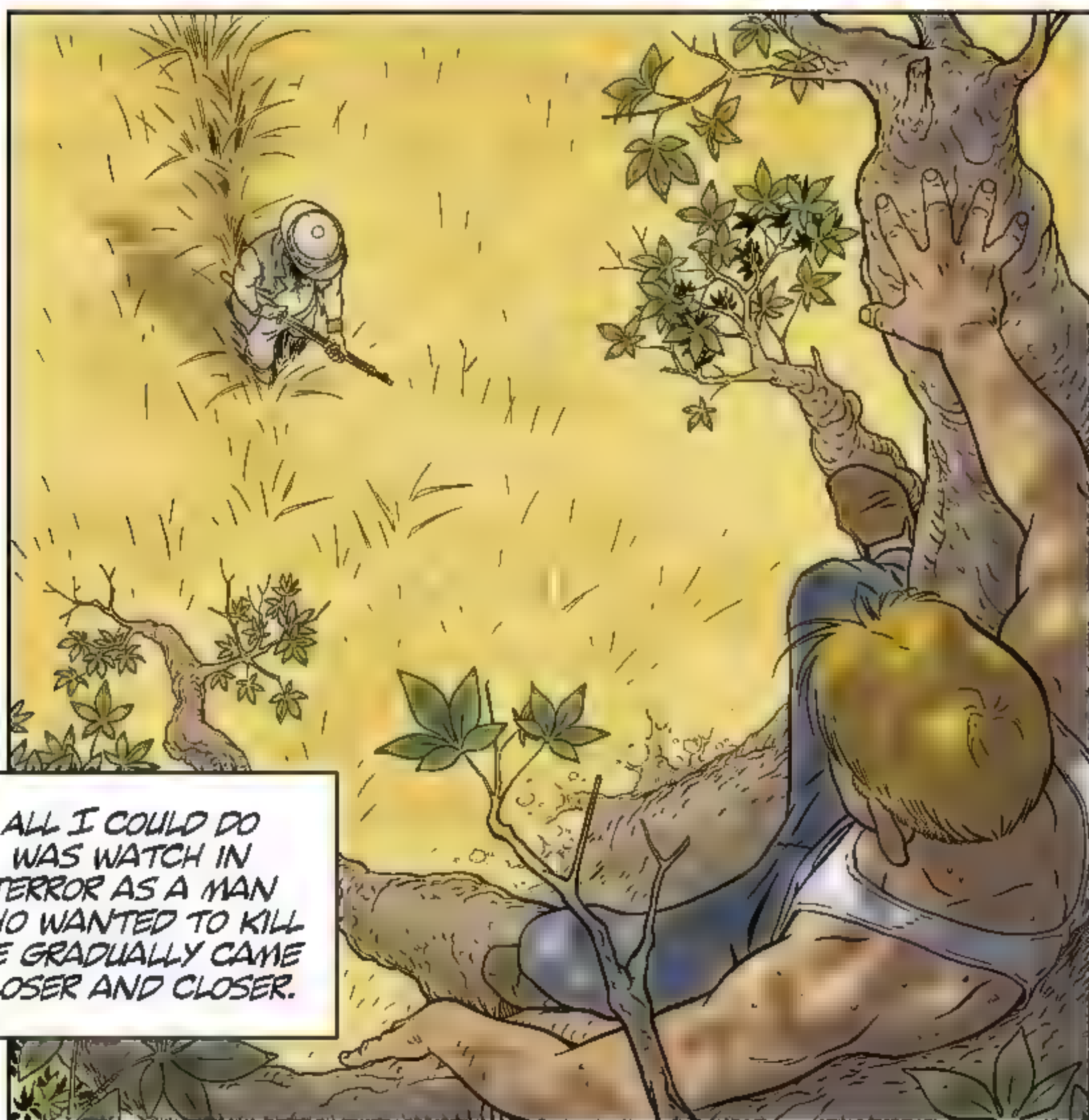
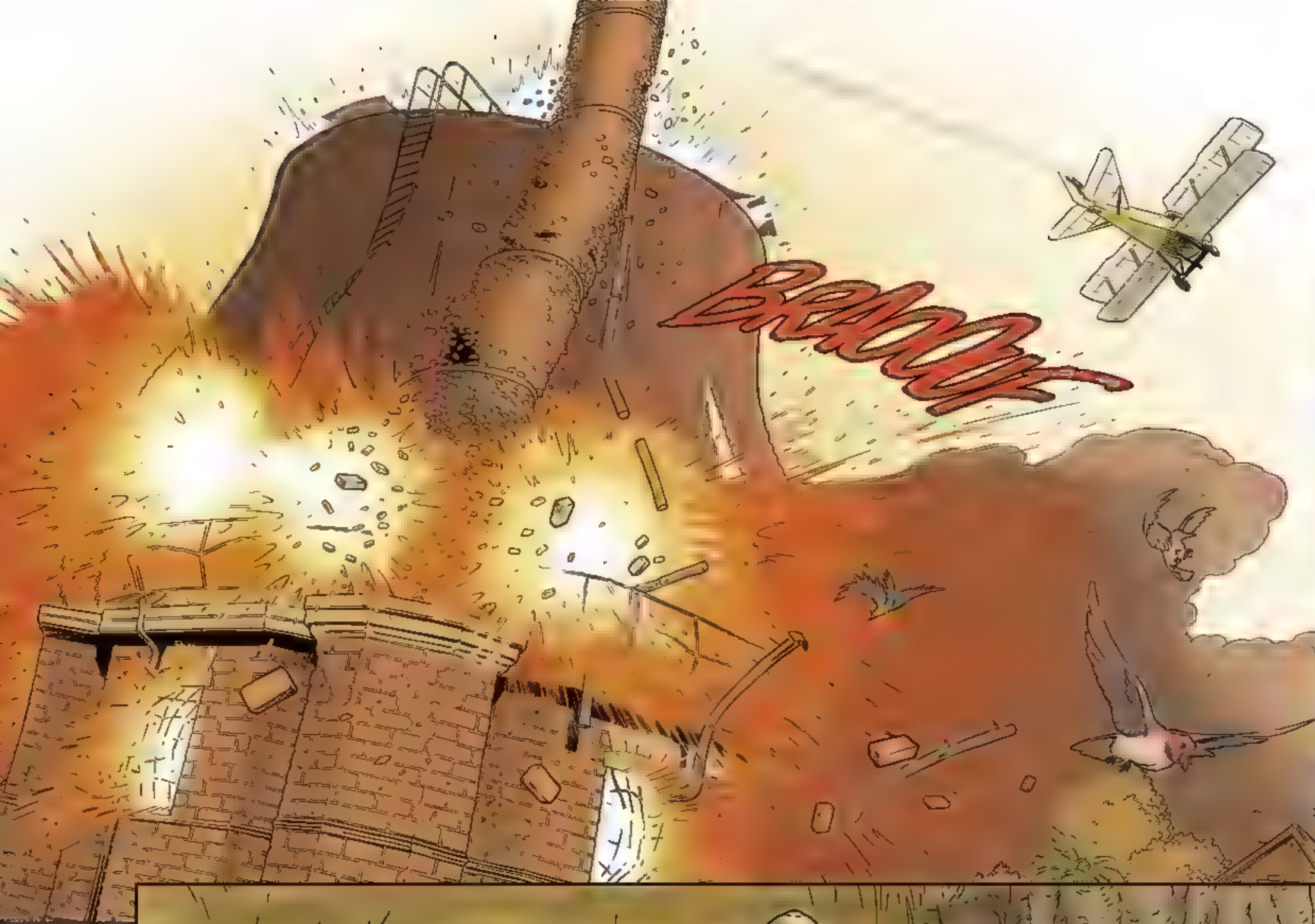
HI THERE,
FRIENDS!

WE HAVE A
LITTLE SURPRISE
FOR YOU!



WHERE THE
DEVIL DID
THAT THING
COME FROM?





HOW IDIOTIC! I WAS ON THE VERGE OF PANIC...

WHERE ARE
YOU, SCUM?

C'MON OUT,
YOU RAT!
YOU CAN'T
ESCAPE ME!

I'LL KILL
YOU FOR
WHAT YOU
DID.

YOU
BASTARD!
YOU--

?

GRROOO

RAAADOOWW

PAW

RAAADOOWW

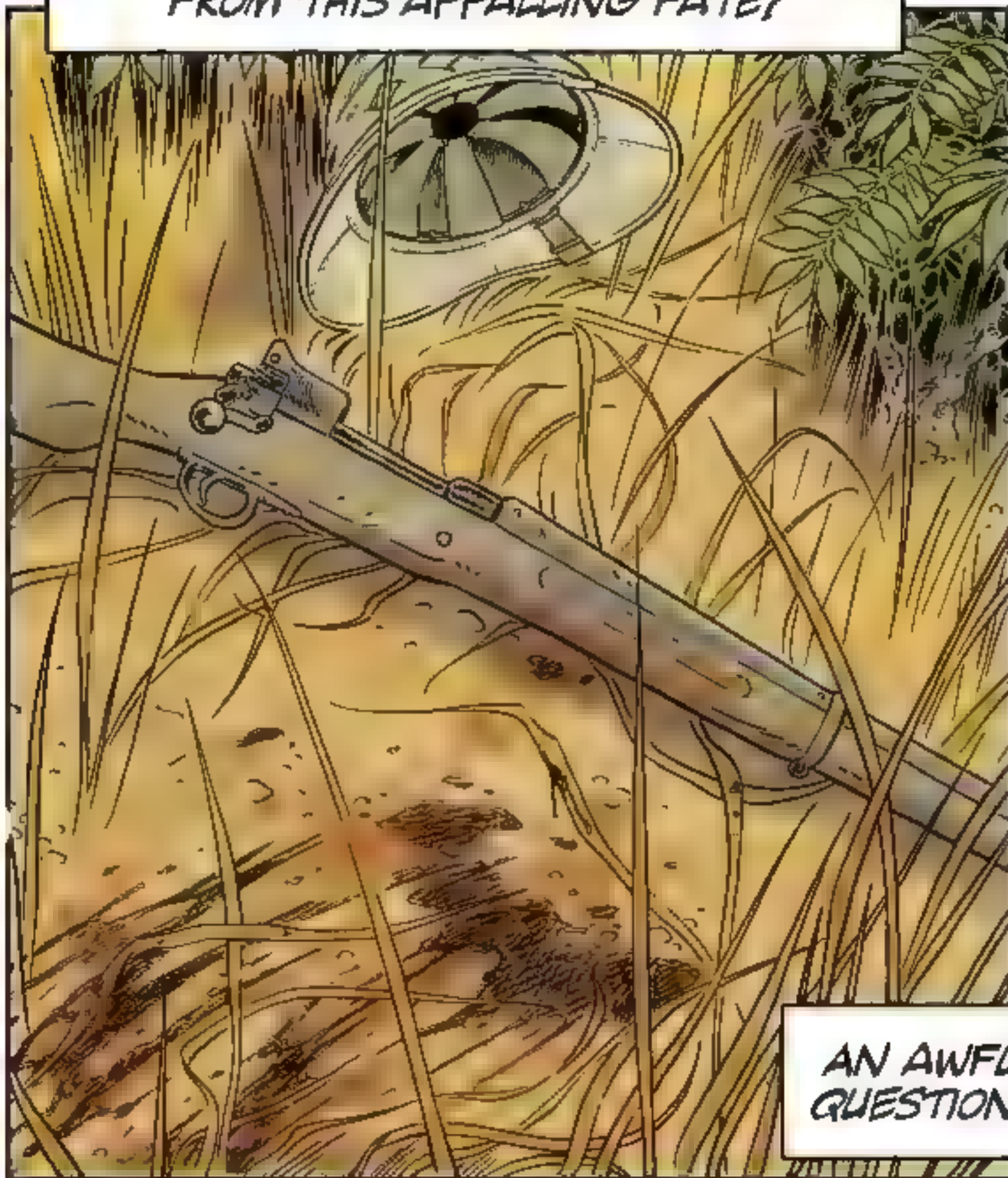
AAARGG!!

AT ONCE HORRIFIED AND
FASCINATED BY THE GHASTLY
SPECTACLE I WAS WITNESSING
JUST A FEW FEET BELOW ME,
I COULDN'T TEAR MY EYES
AWAY FROM IT.

ABOVE ALL, IT MADE ME REALIZE
THAT I FELT NO PITY FOR THE
MAN WHO'D MURDERED SILKE.

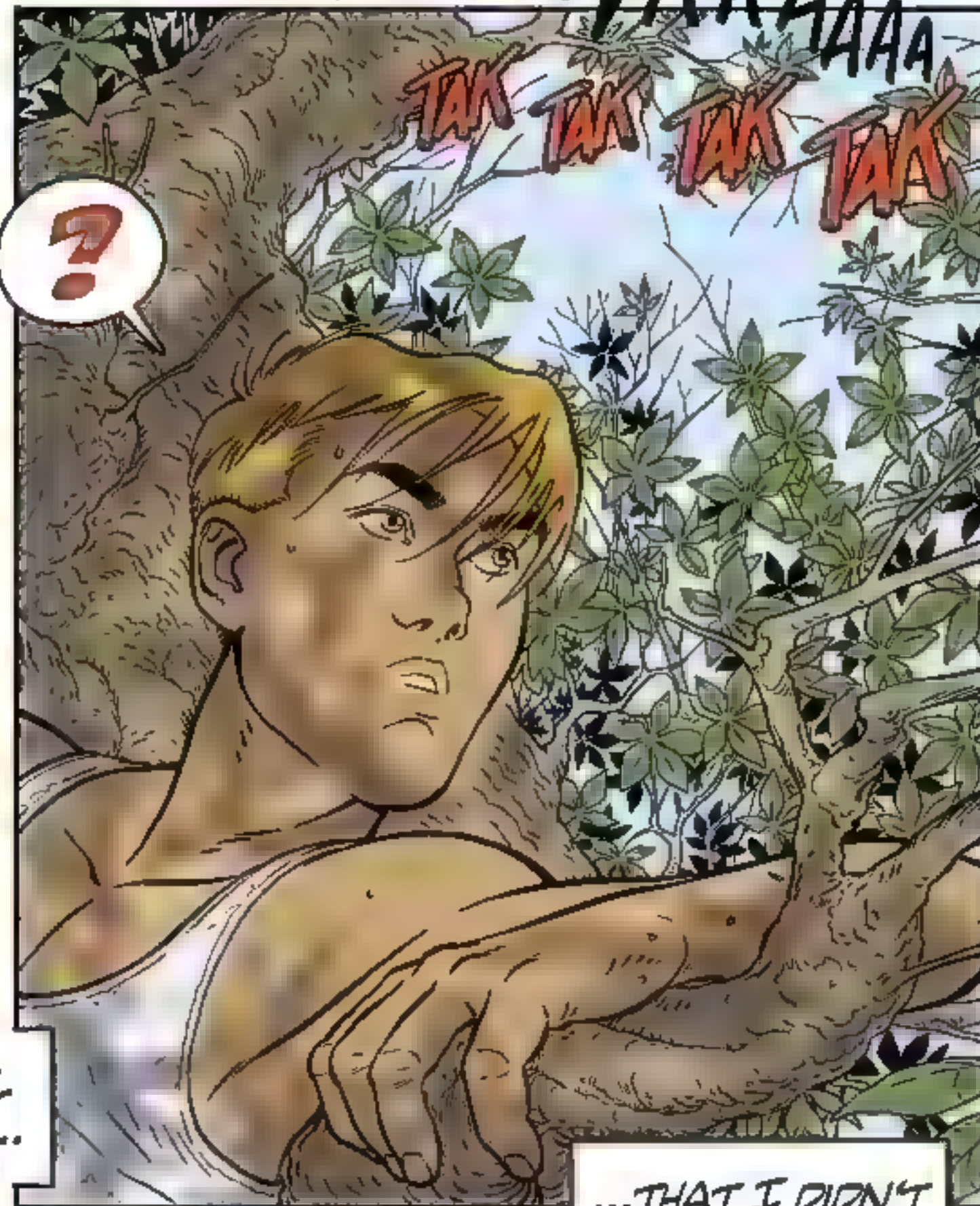


IF I'D HAD A RIFLE, WOULD I HAVE
SHOT THE LION TO SAVE HANSEN
FROM THIS APPALLING FATE?



AN AWFUL
QUESTION...

VRRRAAA/VRRRAAA
TAK TAK TAK TAK

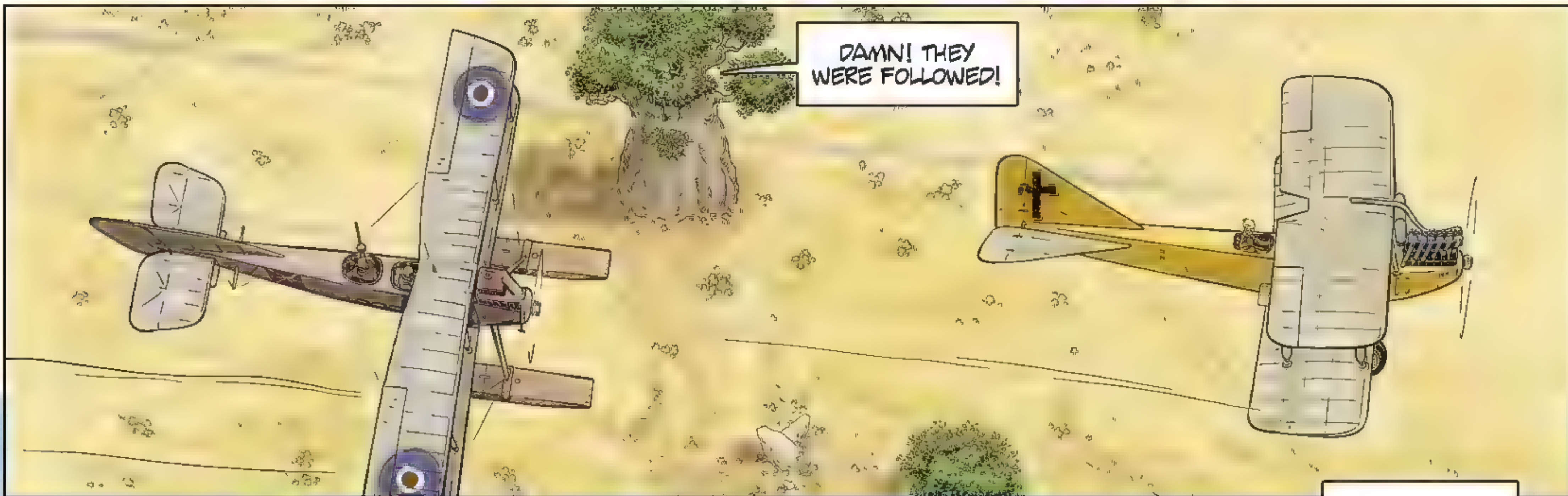


...THAT I DIDN'T
HAVE TIME TO
ANSWER!

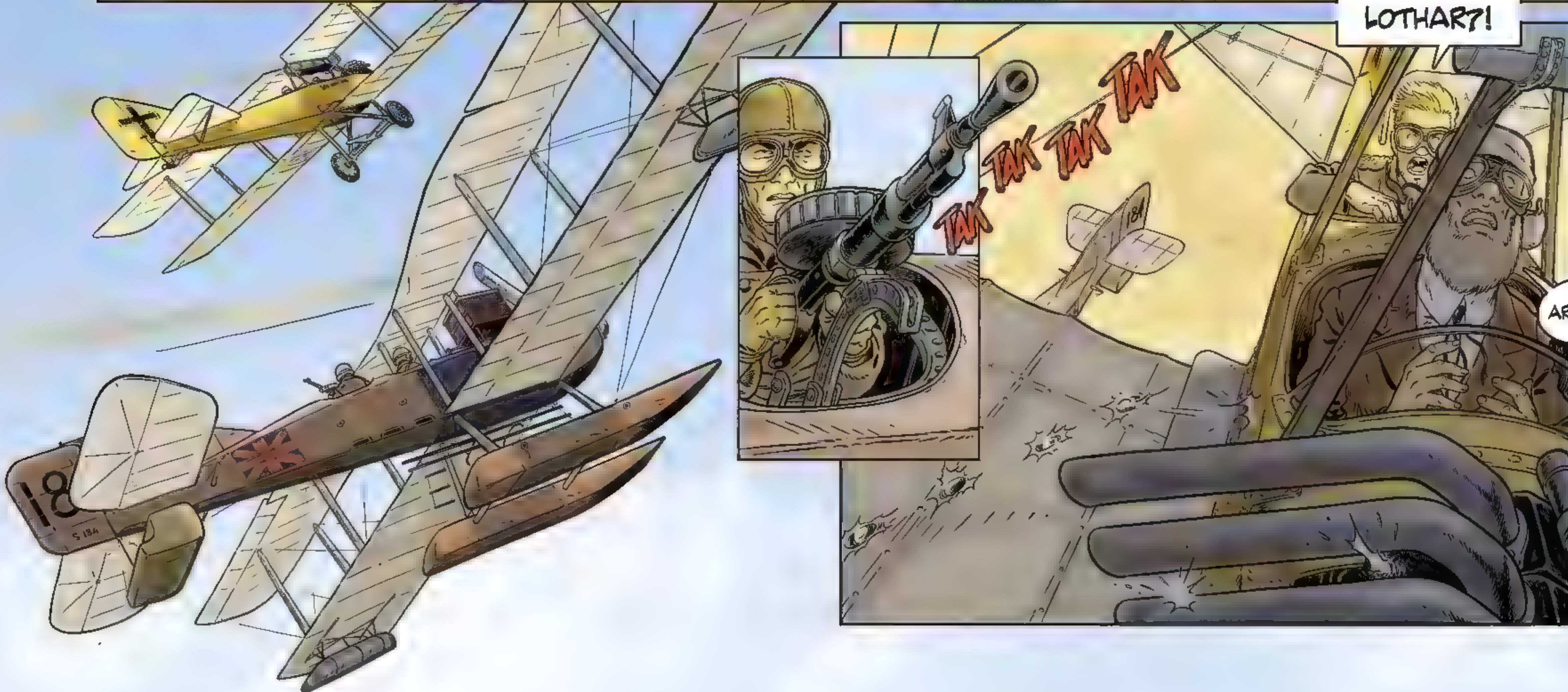
THE ALBATROS?



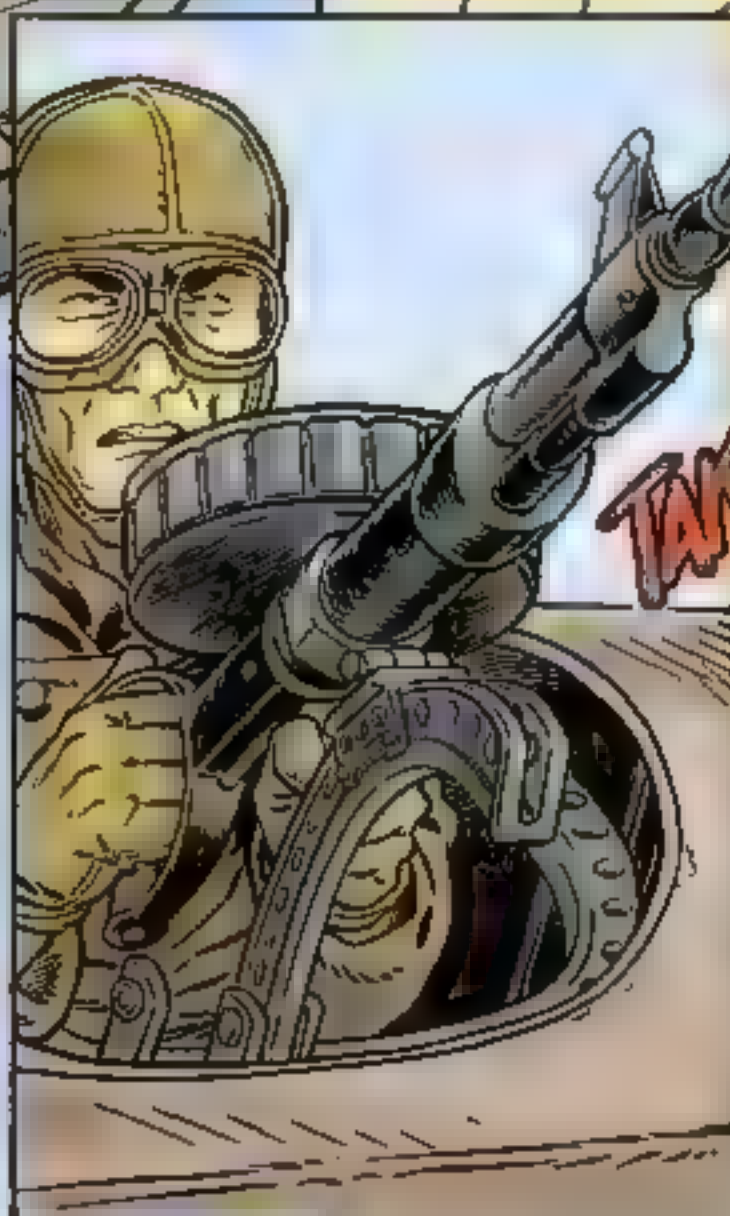
DAMN! THEY
WERE FOLLOWED!



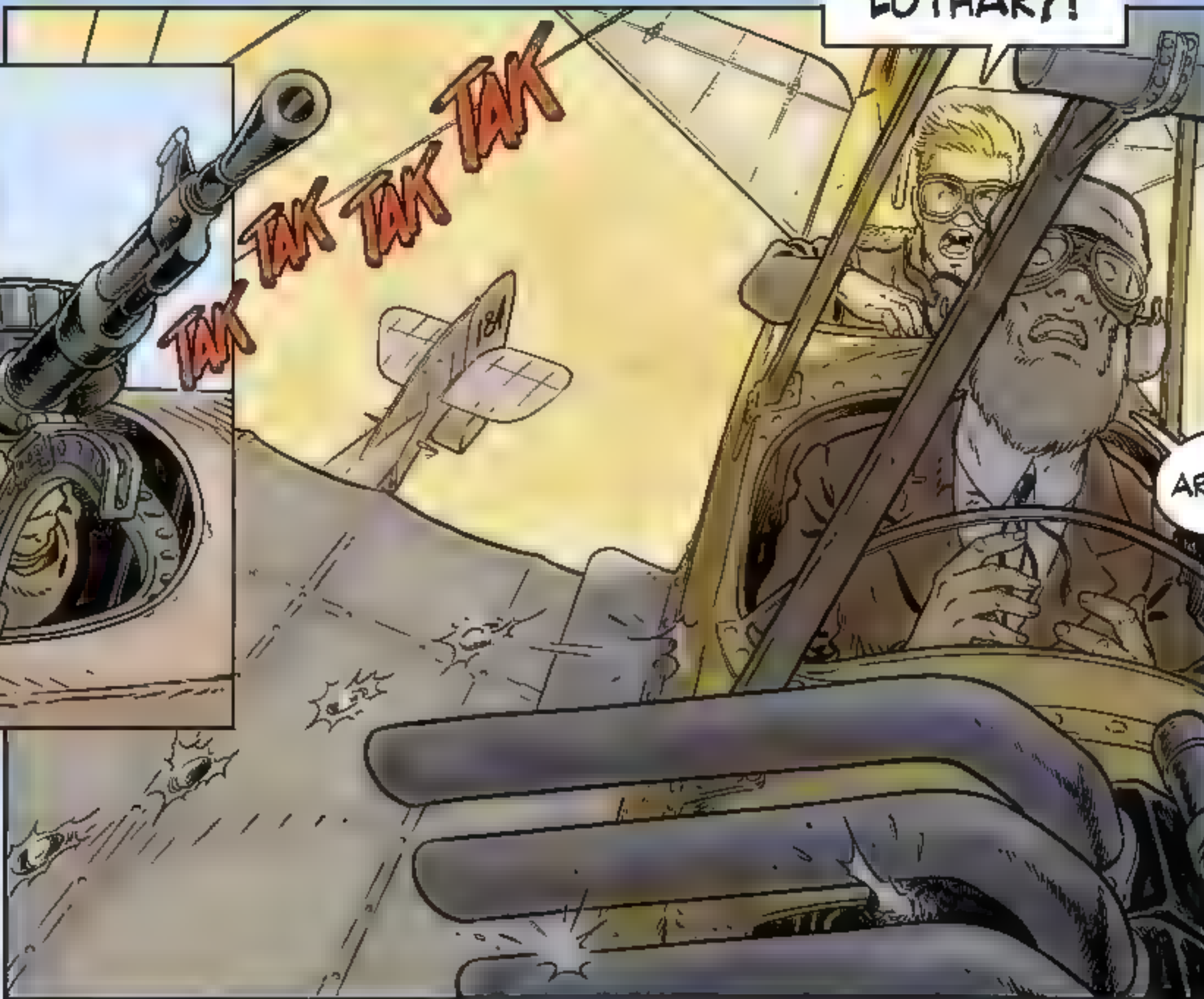
LOTHAR?

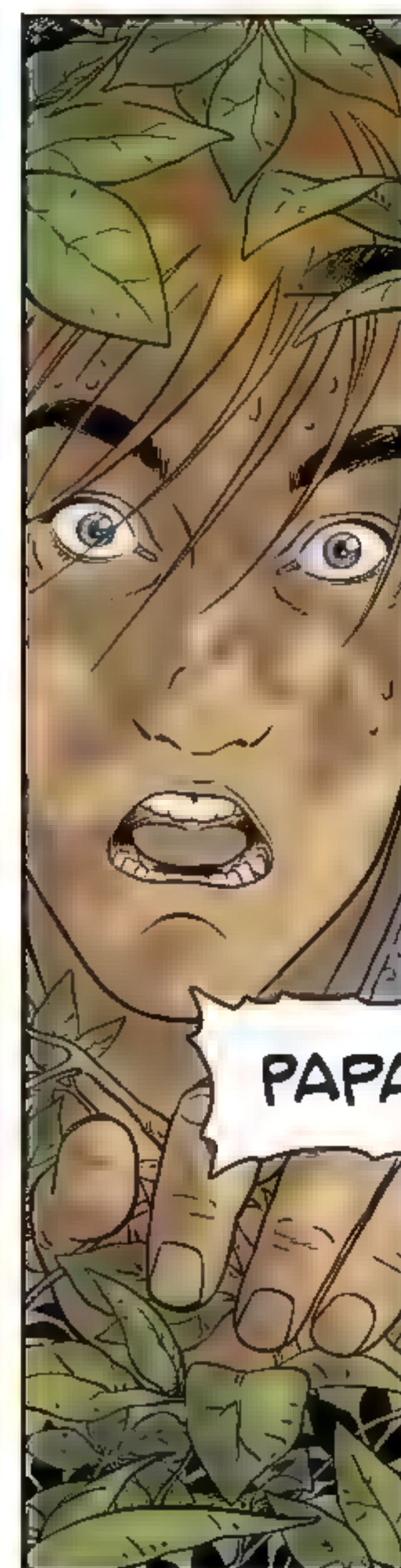
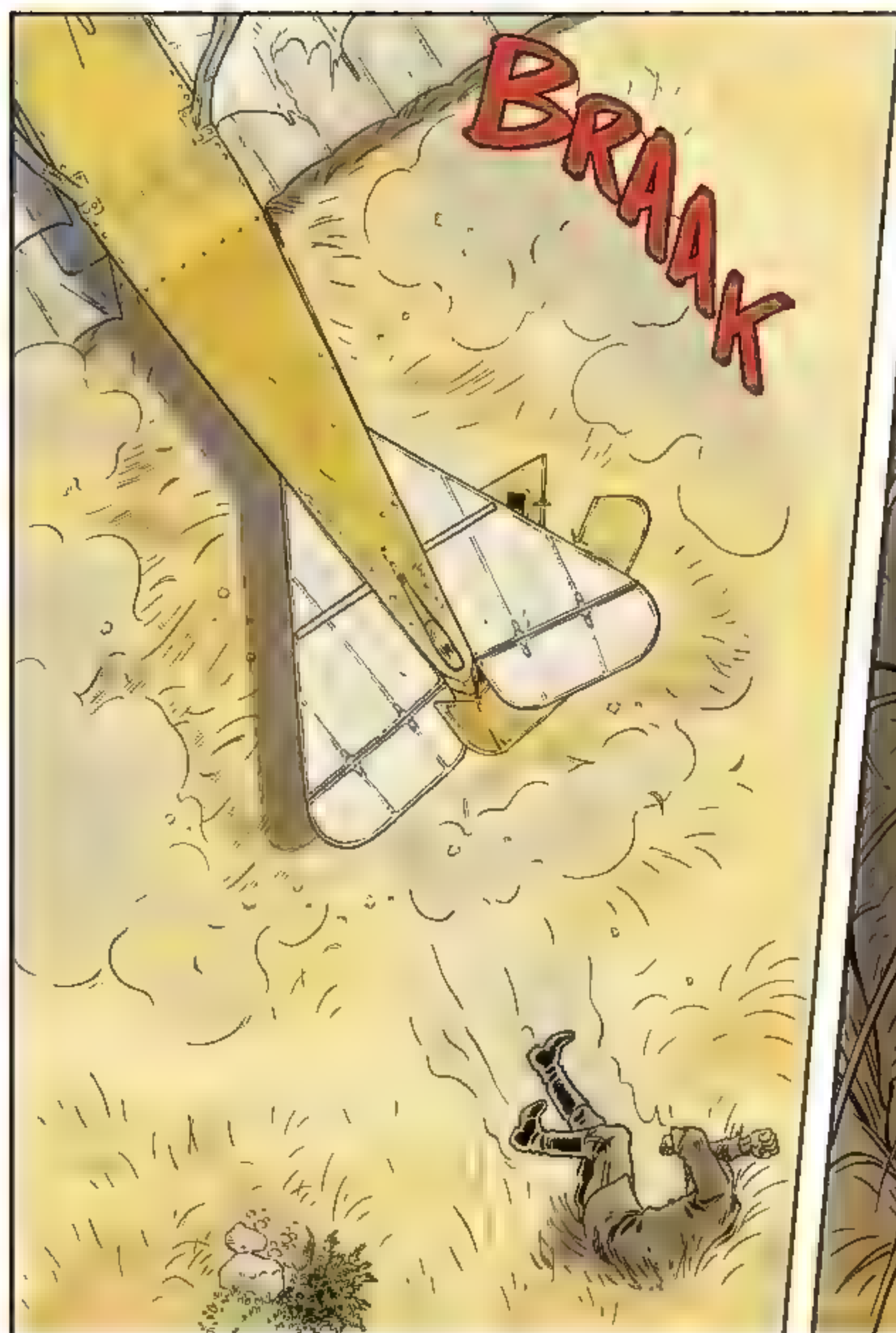
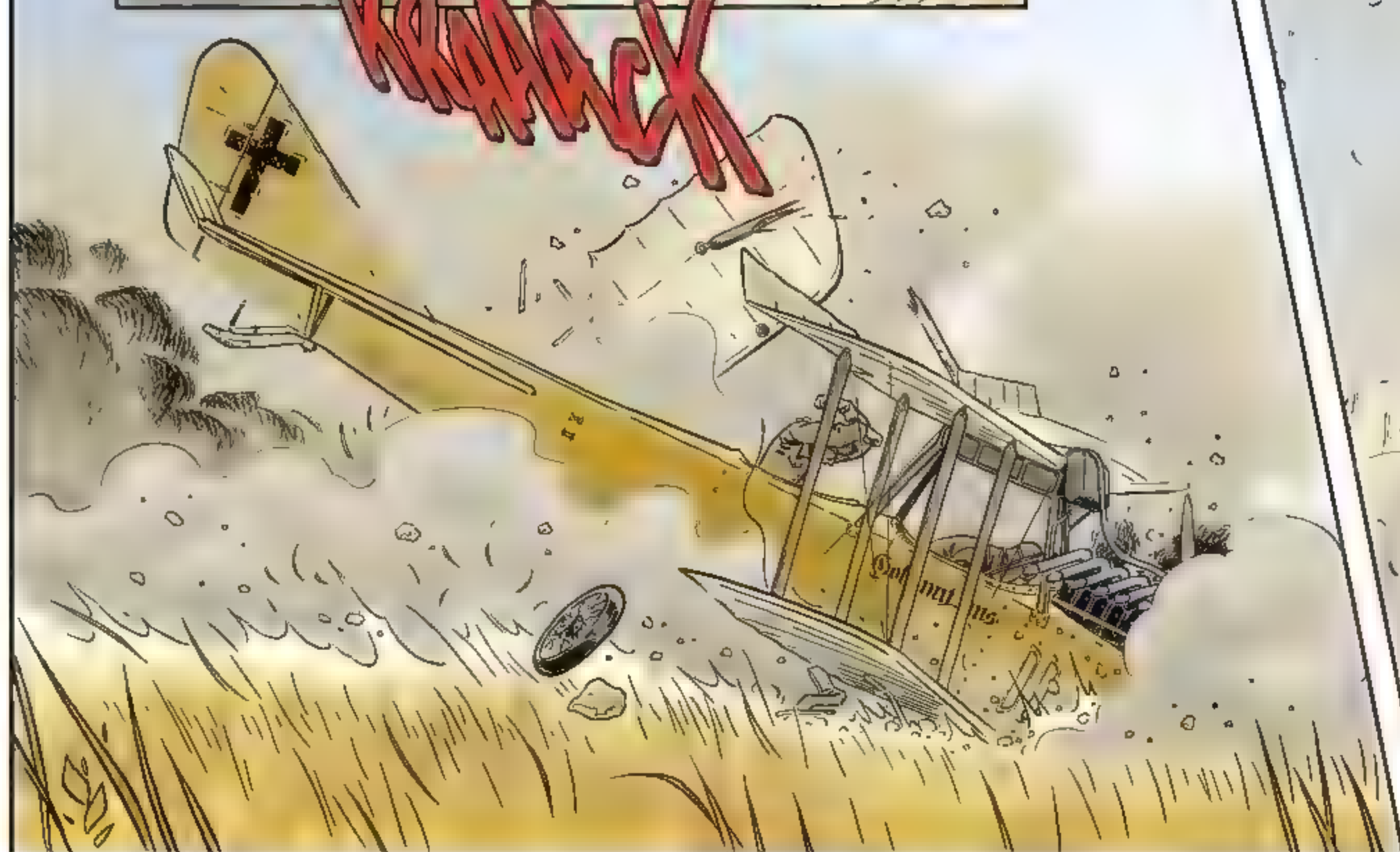
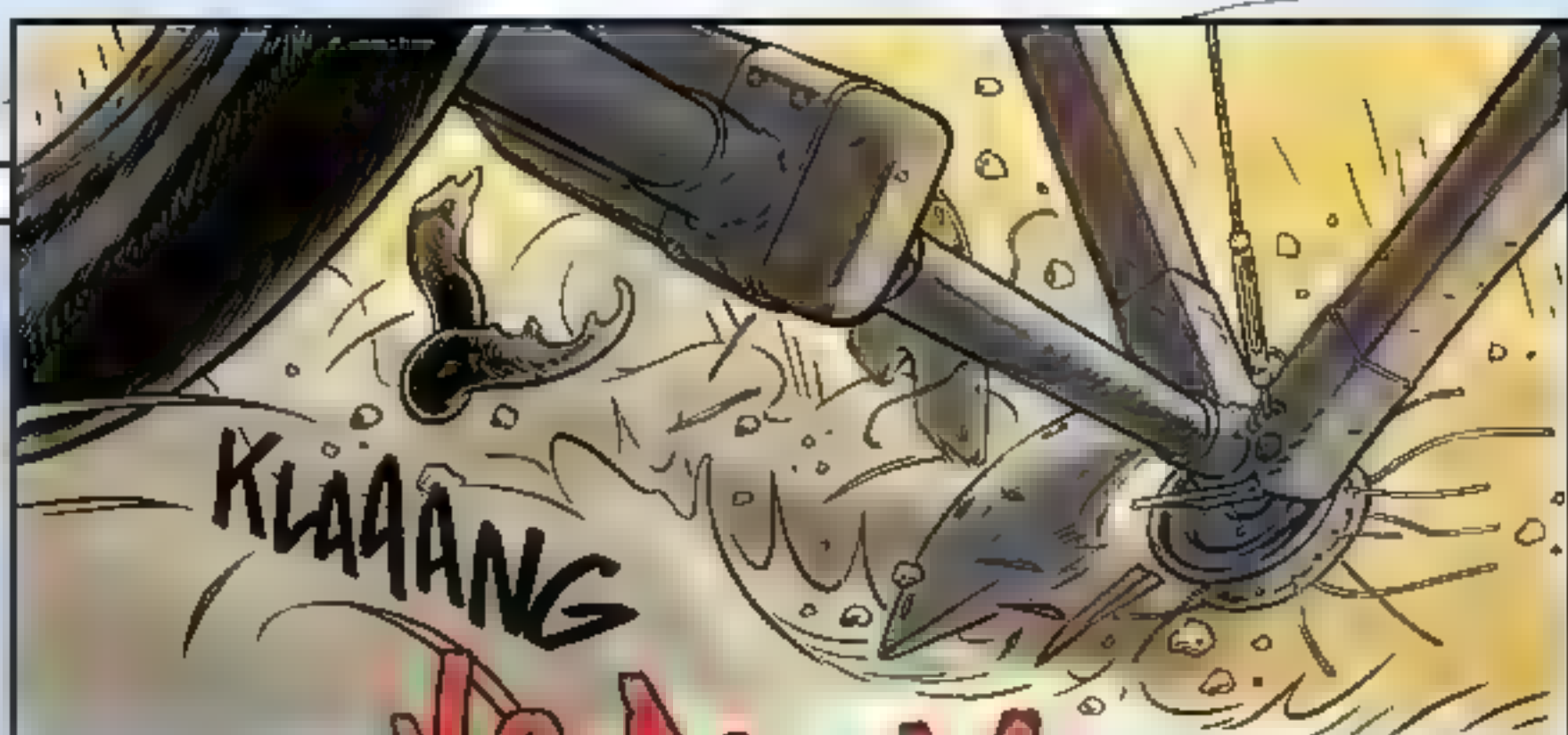
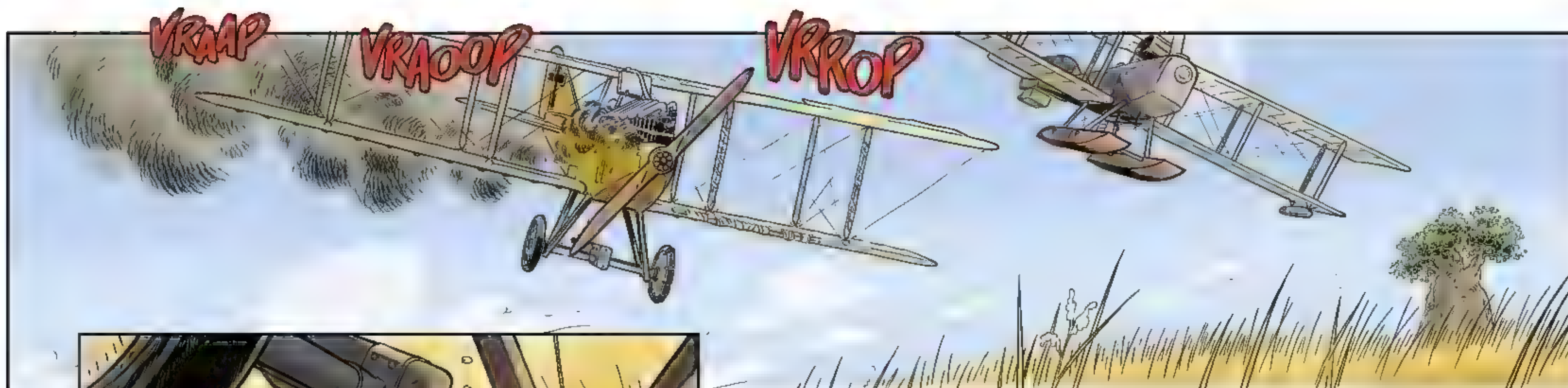


TAK TAK TAK TAK
TAK TAK TAK TAK



ARGH...

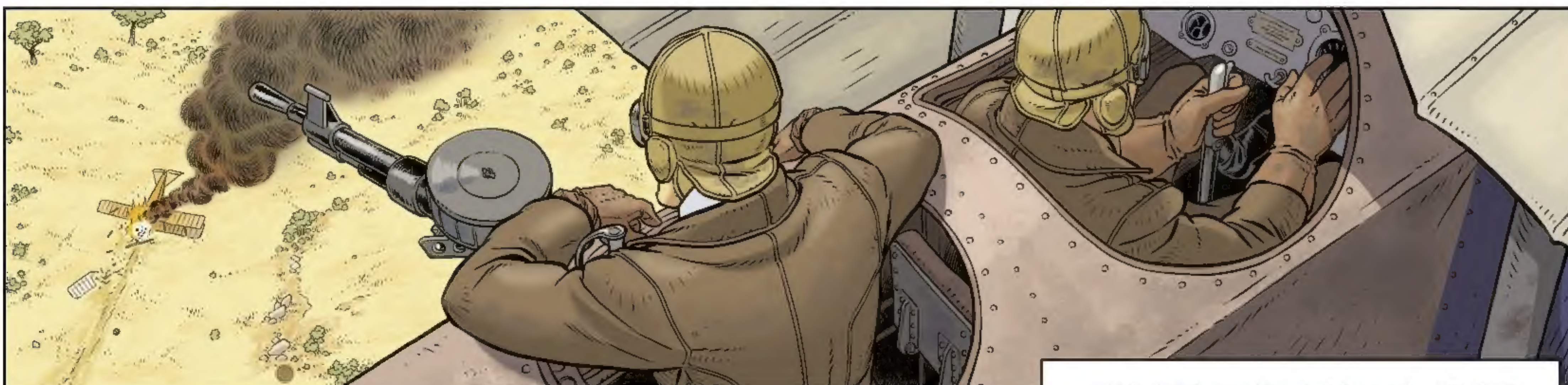




ALL THE NOISE MUST HAVE FRIGHTENED OFF THE LION. WHICH WAS LUCKY FOR ME, BECAUSE TO THIS DAY I DON'T REMEMBER GETTING DOWN FROM THAT BAOBAB TREE.



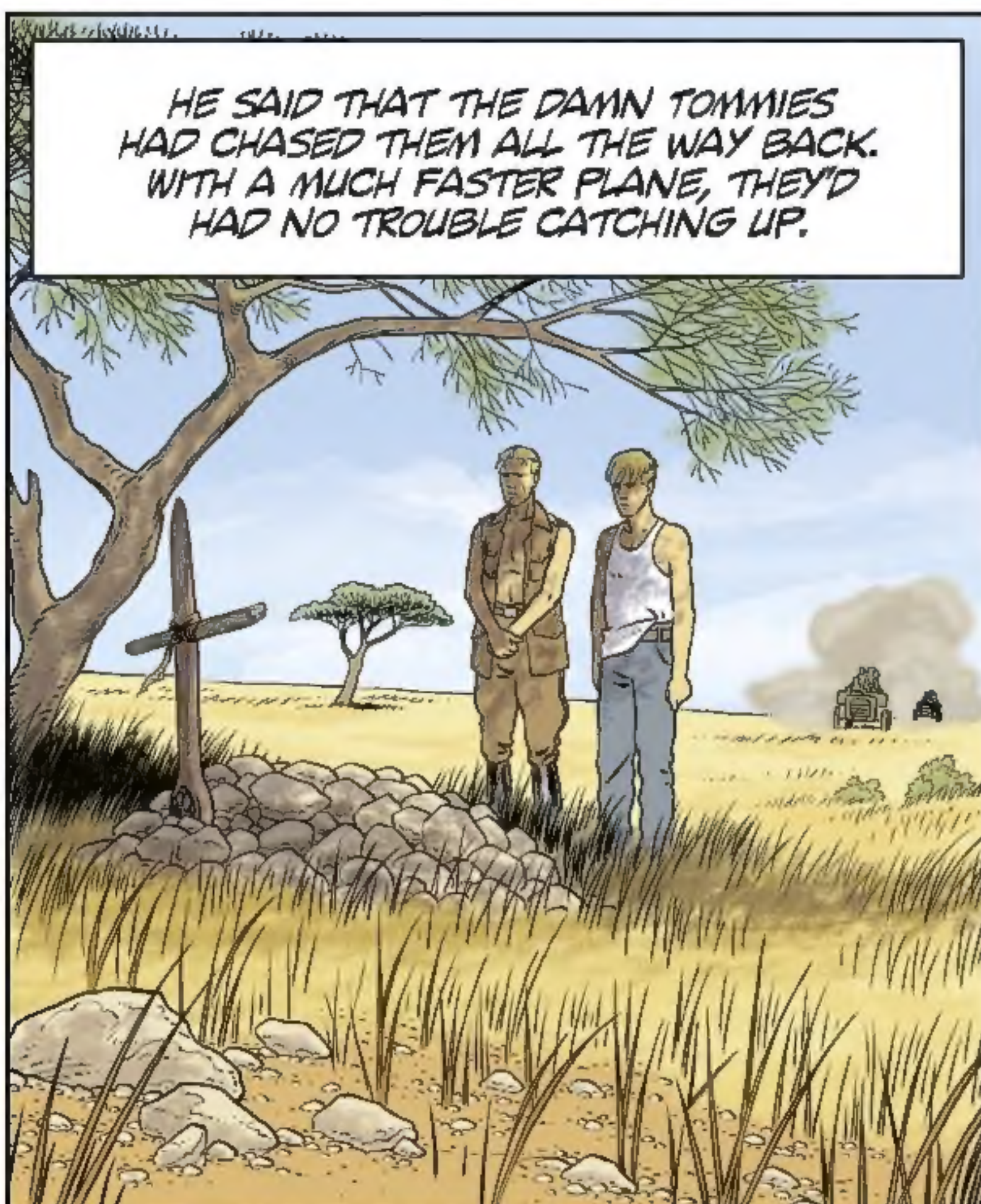
I ONLY SEE MYSELF RUNNING WITHOUT THINKING, NOT FEELING THE ACACIA THORNS TEARING AT MY SKIN.



THE MISSION HAD BEEN A COMPLETE SUCCESS, UNCLE FRIEDRICH TOLD ME. THEY'D FLOWN OVER THE TERMINAL FOUR TIMES, AND TOTALLY DESTROYED IT WITH THEIR LAST SHELL... WHICH LANDED ON A MUNITIONS DEPOT.



HE SAID THAT THE DAMN TOMMIES HAD CHASED THEM ALL THE WAY BACK. WITH A MUCH FASTER PLANE, THEY'D HAD NO TROUBLE CATCHING UP.



FINALLY, HE TOLD ME THAT MY FATHER HAD UNDOUBTEDLY LOVED ME MORE THAN I REALIZED...



...AND THAT HE'D GIVEN HIS LIFE FOR ME, LIKE A HERO.

My uncle and I ended up in a prison camp, where Captain Neumann joined us three weeks later, with his surviving officers...

He surrendered on October 2, 1917, as he fled toward Lake Victoria. His unfortunate Askaris were forced to join the Belgian forces. The opinions of Africans counted for little at the time.



I didn't see my mother again until the end of the war in German East Africa, two weeks after the armistice was signed in Europe.

1 März 1919



On November 25, 1918, von Lettow-Vorbeck, who had taken refuge in Mozambique with his undefeated army, laid down weapons.

It was mission accomplished for a man who would receive a hero's welcome in Berlin in March 1919—with only 20,000 soldiers and 45,000 porters, he'd held off the 400,000 soldiers and 600,00 porters of the "Triple Entente" of Britain, Belgium, and Portugal for four years.

On June 28, 1919, the Treaty of Versailles brought an official end to the German colonial empire, with Britain and Belgium dividing German East Africa between them. My mother, Constance Montval, who had lost her husband, decided to return to her family in France.

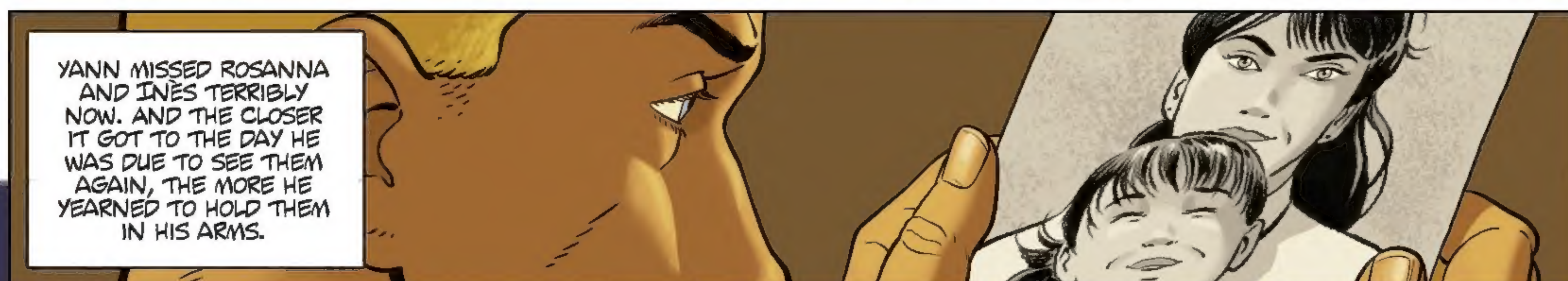
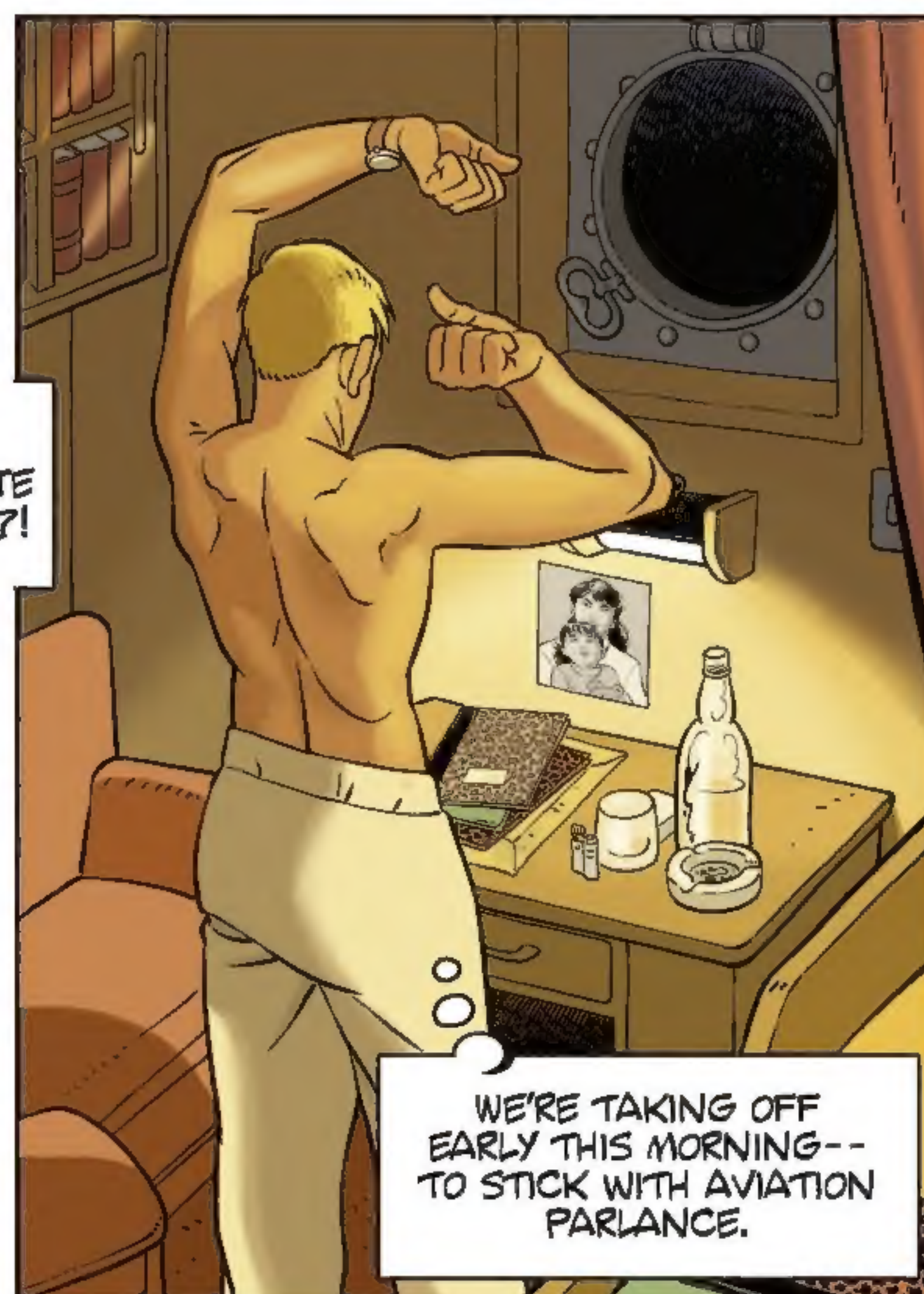


As for me, the first chapter of my life as a pilot was over... and the second was about to begin.





WHAT A START TO
YOUR CAREER, YOUNG
JOSEF... A.K.A.
TANGUY!



END

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thanks to my old friend Marc Dolidier, aviation buff and recreational pilot,
for his technical advice and attentive reading.

JCK

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